

An aerial photograph of the Great Zimbabwe ruins in Zimbabwe. The image shows a large, circular stone wall enclosing a central area with several smaller stone structures and a cluster of trees. The surrounding landscape is a mix of dry earth and green vegetation.

# The Origin of the Zimbabwean Civilisation

R. Gayre of Gayre



# THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

R.GAYRE OF GAYRE

Appendices on some of the Principal Ruins  
of Rhodesia     E. LAYLAND

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## PREFACE

This book arose out of a discussion I had with Major Layland and the publisher, during a visit to Rhodesia. I had worked on the subject for a number of years, frequently visited the ruins, and knew well many of the Bantu peoples involved. I am indebted to Major Layland for his assistance, where I have been able to make use of it.

This book has been undertaken to present what I consider to be the most rational and scientific interpretation of the evidence produced by the phenomena associated with the megalithic ruins of Rhodesia of which Great Zimbabwe, Khami, Naletale, Dhlo-Dhlo, and the terraces of Inyanga, with Mapungubwe in the Transvaal, are the best known examples.

I have not thought it necessary to set out a detailed description of these sites in the body of the text as there is ample literature dealing with them. There are some short descriptions written by Major Layland in an appendix for the benefit of those who have not ready access to the existing literature on the subject. My purpose has been to interpret certain facts of archaeology, and to make a synthesis of them with those of anthropology, and particularly ethnology, comparative religion, geographical communications and distributions.

The whole subject of non-Negroid influence in East and Southern Africa before the coming of the Bantu is a very wide one. The evidence to be culled from rock paintings and engravings alone is something of the greatest importance in this respect. I have, however, rigorously confined myself to the civilisation alone. In this I have found myself on the side of Professors Keane, Dart, Galloway, and the other distinguished scholars who have been forced by the sheer weight of facts to reject a Bantu origin for Zimbabwe. I have not, however, in reluctantly pursuing the task of showing how impossible the pro-Bantu concept is, felt it necessary to present an historic ethnology of Southern Africa.

What is so astonishing is that, faced with a huge complex of irrigation terraces at Inyanga and the size of those megalithic sites which obviously required such an agricultural organisation to feed their inhabitants, anyone should have irresponsibly plunged into the development of a theory of



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

independent Bantu evolution of this civilisation. It is completely out of character of the Bantu and has no justification from other Negroid parts of Africa past or present. Irrigation is limited to the Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Amerindian peoples. The Negroes never have possessed the technical knowledge nor expended labour in such massive enterprises. Irrigation is a characteristic of ancient Egypt, Arabia, Abyssinia, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley civilisation, of Iran, Turkestan, Syria and the Mediterranean countries, of Malaysia, Indo-China, China and the Meso-American civilisations. In the face of such facts sufficient warning was provided for those who have sought to deny the obvious and create this Bantu myth. It is a myth which was not created by the Bantu themselves, who have never made such claims, but is the work of modern European writers. Indeed, Mutwa, a Zulu, who has written two large works on the traditions of the Bantu, categorically states his people were not responsible for this civilisation, which he attributes to a white people he calls the Ma-iti.

It is my view that the case presented is unanswerable in so far as it destroys the concept that this civilisation is due to the Bantu. Whether I have correctly identified those to whom the civilisation is to be attributed may well be arguable as there are so many peoples involved. But, whatever is the final judgement, those indicated cannot fail to have played some important part in the creation of the Rhodesian antiquities we have described.

It is important to point out that I take full responsibility for the writing of the book, for the adopting of any particular theory, such as the rejection of a Phoenician or an Islamic origin for the megalithic buildings we now see in Rhodesia, and, above all, I accept full responsibility for any severe comments which may be made in this book concerning the work of other investigators alive or dead. These views are not necessarily to be attributed to Major Layland, who, in his work as a collaborator, is not responsible for the actual writing of this book and these views to which I have referred. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the publishers for collaboration in providing the excellent illustrative material which has been gathered together by them to illuminate the subject.

Although it is the modern custom in scientific writing to put the name of the author, and year of his publication in brackets, in the text, we have not followed this economy habit. It breaks the sentence unnecessarily and does not lend itself to exact citation with any necessary comments from the author.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Miss M. E. Arbuthnot for undertaking to read the manuscript, as a result of which, faults of which an author is capable in the course of the hurry of writing, have been corrected.

December 1970

R. GAYRE OF GAYRE AND NIGG.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
List of Illustrations and Acknowledgements	9
1 The Geographical Background of East Africa in Relation to Climate, Movement and Navigation	15
2 East Africa: its Exploration and Trade with the Outside World	24
3 Mineral Resources and Plant Distribution in Relation to Settlement in Eastern Africa	49
4 Introduction to a few of the Exotic Elements of Culture relevant to the Zimbabwean Civilisation	59
5 The Megalithic and Foreign Character of the Rhodesian Zimbabwean Culture; and its Relationship to Structures in the Mediterranean Area and Arabia	71
6 Saba or the Yemen as a Great Maritime Power	88
7 The Significance of the Falashas, the so-called Black Jews of Abyssinia	93
8 The Parallel between Zimbabwe and Nubia in Relation to Foreign Cultural Influences	98
9 A Criticism of the Theory that the Bantu created the Zimbabwean Civilisation	101
10 The Age of the Zimbabwe Ruins and its Bearing upon the People who erected them	108

11	Founders of Zimbabwe	119
12	Ethnological Evidence of pre-Islamic Sabaeen and other Foreign Origins from Bantu Source	128
13	The Relevance of the Religious Concepts found in the Zimbabwean Civilisation	138
14	Islamic Influence	161
15	The Ethnology of Zingian Africa	165
16	Rhodesian Gold Extraction in Ancient Times	177
17	Foreign Articles and Artefacts found in the Great Zimbabwe Ruins	185
18	The Collapse of the Zimbabwean Civilisation	197
19	The Monomotapa and Early Records of Zimbabwe	205
20	The Zimbabwe Myth: Misconception of the Century	212
	Appendix I The Ruins at Naletali, Khami and Dhlo Dhlo and those of Van Niekerk	223
	Appendix II Table of Comparisons between the Awwam Temple, Marib, Yemen and Great Zimbabwe Temple	234
	Bibliography I Works Cited in the Text	235
	Bibliography II Selected Works bearing on the Subject, not cited in the Text	241
	Index	243



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Monochrome

**Page 14** A view of the Temple ruin known as the Great Zimbabwe. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

**Page 25** Western part of the map of the world, *Atlante Mediceo*, 1351, or the *Portolano Laurenziano Gaditano*, showing that Africa was known to be able to be circumnavigated (except for its narrow land junction with Asia) nearly 150 years before the Portuguese discovered the Cape route to India. *By courtesy of the Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.*

**Page 39** Map of Southern Africa, dated 1564, by Giacomo Gastaldi, showing Zimbabwe in its correct latitude and in relation to Sofala on the coast. From *Studia*, vol. 2, July 1958. *Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 48** A view of masonry of the Acropolis overlooking Zimbabwe in the background. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 50** A stele on the wall of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 53** The Parallel Passages in the Elliptical Temple at Zimbabwe. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 54** A view of the massive wall structure as now seen at Zimbabwe. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 56** Walling and steps at Zimbabwe. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 61 top:** This photograph shows the overgrown state of Zimbabwe in 1890. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.*

**Page 61 bottom:** The Temple of Great Zimbabwe after initial clearing revealed the break in the wall caused by the fall of an ancient hardwood tree from within the derelict ruin, as described by Carl Mauch in 1870. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.*

**Page 62** Overgrown ruins of Zimbabwe in the 1890s makes unreasonable the claim that it was occupied until 1835. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.*

**Page 64** This photograph was taken by the official photographer to the Pioneer Column in 1890, and shows the partially-cleared Conical Tower at Great Zimbabwe. It was more densely covered with vegetation when discovered by Carl Mauch in 1870. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.*

**Page 67** Zimbabwe birds with disk, chevron and crocodile motifs. From: *Prehistoric Rhodesia* by R. N. Hall. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1909. *By courtesy of Ernest Benn. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

**Page 72** The Nuraghe of Barumini showing the fortress-like structure overlooking the surrounding town.

**Page 74 top:** The chevron pattern on the 30 ft.-high wall, Temple, Zimbabwe Ruins. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 74 centre:** An example of walling at the Naletali Ruins, showing chevron, cord, herring-bone and chequer-board patterns. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

**Page 74 bottom:** Walling at Shaganja Ruins showing chequer and herring-bone pattern. *By courtesy of the Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Photo: Roy Creeth.*

**Page 75 top:** Herring-bone and sun-disk patterns on a ruined mosque, Pemba Island, circa 10th century A.D. From *Zanzibar* by F. B. Pearce. London: Unwin, 1920.

**Page 75 bottom:** Ancient Egyptian relief showing the chevron pattern representing the water of life in the motif of the clothing. From *Egyptian Mythology*. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965.

**Page 76** Cord and chequer pattern on a Zanzibar mosque. From *Zanzibar* by F. B. Pearce. London: Unwin, 1920.

**Page 78** An aerial view of Zimbabwe. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 79** An aerial view of the Sabea Temple of Awwam, circa 750 B.C. *By courtesy of Professor Herman V. Wibmann, Tübingen.*

**Page 83 top:** An underground megalithic type of "pit-dwelling". *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 83 bottom:** The entrance to a "pit-dwelling", Inyanga, showing the use of lintel, threshold and strong foundation stones. *By courtesy of the Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Photo: Roy Creeth.*

**Page 85** Hill terracing east of the Inyanga mountain range. *Photo: G. W. Nichols.*

**Page 86** An example of terracing found in the highest mountain area of the Yemen at Jebel Harraz, between Sa'an and the Red Sea. *Photo: Hans Helfritz.*

**Page 112** The exterior of a drain in the main wall, the Temple, Zimbabwe. From *Prehistoric Rhodesia* by R. N. Hall. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1909. *By courtesy of Ernest Benn. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 120** Cord-pattern design at Dhlo Dhlo Ruins. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 121** An example of the masonry at the Khami Ruins. *By courtesy of the Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Photo: Alan Allen.*

**Page 123 top:** The Khami Ruins: note the chequer pattern. *Photo: Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia.*

**Page 123 bottom:** The Khami Ruins. *By courtesy of the Ministry of Information, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Photo: Roy Creeth.*

**Page 124** A soapstone bowl from Zimbabwe. The words "Found by C. Mauch 187 —" are scratched on the bowl, together with a sketch of a Sable Antelope. *As displayed in the Zimbabwe Museum. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 129** These distinctly Armenoid traits are to be found among the MaLemba in the BaVenda Northern Transvaal. From *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 71, 1931. *Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 130** The Bajuni of Lamu, Kanga coast of East Africa, are of Persian origin and, with Sabaeans, have inhabited the coast and coastal islands including Zanzibar from the pre-Christian era. Note the Caucasoid facial features. *Photo: Argus Africa News Service.*

**Page 133 top:** A member of the Makorekore tribe, Mount Darwin district, whose features show evidence of Caucasoid genes.

**Page 133 bottom:** Traces of Caucasoid features in a Shona induna of the Victoria area, 1890s. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 143 top:** Phallic bird symbols from Zimbabwe. From *Black Eros* by Boris de Rachewiltz. London: Allen and Unwin, 1964.

**Page 143 bottom:** Roman and Egyptian phalli. *By courtesy of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum.*

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

**Page 145** Figurines from Zimbabwe, possibly of a goddess. From *Black Eros* by Boris de Rachewiltz. London: Allen and Unwin, 1964.

**Page 146** Ithyphallic image. From *Phallic Worship* by George Ryley Scott. London: Luxor 1968.

**Page 147** top: Egyptian phallic worship depicting the male and female creative forces in the mythology of Ancient Egypt. From *Phallic Worship* by George Ryley Scott. London: Luxor 1968.

**Page 147** bottom: Egyptian worship of the phallus. From *Phallic Worship* by George Ryley Scott. London: Luxor 1968.

**Page 148** Soapstone objects found by R. N. Hall at Zimbabwe, showing stylised human figures and phalli pendants, pipes for smoking Indian hemp (dagga) and amulets. The lower objects are of unknown use. *Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 151** top: A coin of Byblos showing the round tower analogous to that of Zimbabwe. From *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* by J. T. Bent. London: Longmans Green, 1892. *Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 151** bottom: A round tower, showing pattern work in the masonry reminiscent of Zimbabwe. This stone round tower is situated in the fortified village of Bajil in the Tahama, near the Red Sea, Yemen. *Photo: Hans Helfritz.*

**Page 152** The Stone Tower at Zimbabwe, *By courtesy of the Ministry of Information. Salisbury, Rhodesia. Photo: Roy Creeth.*

**Page 153** The remains of a round tower of the period of Hammurabi. *Photo: Paul Popper Ltd.*

**Page 154** top: Nineteenth century minaret of the mosque at Malindi, Zanzibar, showing the chevron design.

**Page 154** bottom: Megalithic type of building in juxtaposition with a tower, as still to be found in Arabia. From *Arabia Phoenix* by Gerald de Gaury. London: Harrap, 1946.

**Page 156** A stone stele with concentric circles on the wall of Milaboni's Kraal, Vandaland, Northern Transvaal. From *BaVenda* by H. A. Stayt. London: OUP, 1931. *By courtesy of the International African Institute. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 157** Carved soapstone birds. From *Prehistoric Rhodesia* by R. N. Hall. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1909. *By courtesy of Ernest Benn. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 158** Bird stelae from the walls of Zimbabwe. From *Prehistoric Rhodesia* by R. N. Hall. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1909. *By courtesy of Ernest Benn. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 169** Drawing made in the Umfuli district in 1870, by Thomas Baines, showing long-haired Shonas hunting, confirming some admixture of non-Negroid genes. *Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 178** Members of the Ancient Ruins Syndicate, 1895, with gold ornaments recovered from the ancient ruins of Zimbabwe. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 179** Entrance to one of the many ancient mines tunnelled into a quartz reef, mined intensively over a wide area. *By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 180** Gold foil and wire work from Zimbabwe. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

**Page 181** Gold ornaments and pottery discovered at Dhlo Dhlo and M'telegwa Ruins. From *The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia* by R. N. Hall and W. G. Neal. London: Methuen, 1902. *Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.*

**Page 184** Pottery from the Gerzean culture found in the cemeteries of Naqada and El-Ballas, showing stylised water, hills and spirals. *By courtesy of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh. Photo: Tom Scott.*

**Page 187** top: A stele of the Goddess Tanit (Carthaginian). This is probably of the same common origin as the soapstone and other megalithic standing stones found in Zimbabwe. From *Life and Death of Carthage* by G. Ch. Picard. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1968. *By courtesy of Professor Picard.*

**Page 187** bottom: Flat idols from the Iberian peninsula, probably of the same ultimate origins as the soapstone beam of Zimbabwe and the image of the Goddess Tanit, Carthage. From *Gods of Prehistoric Man* by J. Maringer. London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1960.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

**Page 188** A decorated soapstone beam. From *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* by J. T. Bent. London: Longmans Green, 1892. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 189** Geometric patterns on decorated soapstone beams, Zimbabwe. From *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* by J. T. Bent. London: Longmans Green, 1892. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 192** top: A soapstone cylinder from Zimbabwe. From *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* by J. T. Bent. London: Longmans Green, 1892. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 192:** bottom: Object from the Temple of Pathos, Cyprus. From *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* by J. T. Bent. London: Longmans Green, 1892. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 195:** Copper ingots from Katanga (A-C) and mould from Zimbabwe (D). From *Erythrae* by Leo Frobenius. Berlin: Atlantic, 1931. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 199** Chief Goromonzi of the maShona-Zegura, circa 1901. These Shona tribesmen indicate racially mixed types through infiltration of non-Negroid genes. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 200** The Dzata Ruins, Vendaland. From *BaVenda* by H. A. Stayt. London: OUP, 1931. By courtesy of the International African Institute. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 201** The Dzata Ruins, Vendaland. From *The Mankind Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 1, July-September, 1967.

**Page 203** Semitic features of two ma-Karanga of the last century. From *Prehistoric Rhodesia* by R. N. Hall. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1909. By courtesy of Ernest Benn. Photo: National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 204** Typical Negroid Bantu Tonga (a group of Atonga from West Nyasa). The BaTonga arrived earlier than most of the Bantu in Rhodesia. By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia.

**Page 208** top: Grass huts among broken-down derelict walls as found by the Pioneer Column. This indicates that Zimbabwe was a deserted and overgrown relic at that time. By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.

**Page 208** bottom: The Shona tribes near Fort Victoria (the Zimbabwe area) were not stone builders. Grass huts were their typical natural dwellings. By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.

**Page 210** The condition of the Bantu at Zimbabwe in the time of Theodore Bent. By courtesy of the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Ellerton Fry, 1890.

**Page 219** An enlargement of a portion of a wall painting found in the Chamavara Cave near Fort Victoria with slight outlining done on the spot, of the principal figure. This shows a woman in Arabic or Indian dress, with upturned boots, trousers and choli (or breast jacket) exposing the midriff. By courtesy of Mr. H. G. Sumner, Fort Victoria.

### Colour

#### Between Pages 40 and 41

Aerial View of the Enclosure, Zimbabwe. Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.

A water colour of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe, painted by J. Theodore Bent, 1891. From the original as displayed in the National Archives of Rhodesia. Photo: Mike Grant-Parke.

Photo of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe, as it appears today. Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.

West wall of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe, surmounted by turrets. Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Between Pages 104 and 105

A statue of the sacred Falcon of Horus at a temple built at Edfu by the Ptolemaic kings. *Photo: Eliot Elisofon.*

A stele of Djer, third king of the First Dynasty, also known as King Serpent, found at Abydos. *By courtesy of the Louvre Museum. Photo: Peter Clayton.*

Soapstone bird stele, at Zimbabwe, showing sun disk and chevron patterns, and crocodile on the left. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

Hieroglyphs from the pylon of Thutmose I at Karnak. Note the bird and chevron symbols. *Photo: Eliot Elisofon.*

### Between Pages 168 and 169

Examples of gold-plating found at Mapungubwe. *By courtesy of the Transvaal Museum. Photo: University of Pretoria.*

A gold bowl found at Mapungubwe. *By courtesy of the Transvaal Museum. Photo: University of Pretoria.*

### Maps and Ground Plans

**Page 16** Wind systems in the Indian Ocean (November to May).

**Page 17** Wind systems in the Indian Ocean (May to November).

**Page 73** Ground plan of the Nuraghe of Barumini (after Dr. Piero Pes).

**Page 80** Ground plan of Zimbabwe.

**Page 81** Ground plan of the Temple of Awwam. This is the Temple of Ilumquh in the city of Marib, Yemen. *By courtesy of Dr. Wendell Phillips.*

**Page 182** Areas of Ancient Gold Workings. (After A. J. Wills, *By courtesy of the Oxford University Press.*)

Gold-plated rhinoceros found at the ancient burial site of Mapungubwe. *By courtesy of the Transvaal Museum. Photo: University of Pretoria.*

Glass beads, thin sheets of gold, and various relics found at Zimbabwe. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

### Between Pages 228 and 229

Exterior of the massive stone walling at Zimbabwe. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

Wall of the Nuraghe of Barumini, Sardinia, showing a herring-bone design. Note the narrow laneways between the megalithic structures. *Photo: R. Gayre of Gayre.*

Part of the walling, Dhlo Dhlo Ruins, showing a similar herring-bone design. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

Broken walling, Acropolis, Zimbabwe. *Photo: Rhodesia National Tourist Board.*

**Page 222** Sites of Stone Ruins.

**Page 224** Ground plan, Naletali Ruins.

**Page 226** Ground plan, Khami Hill Ruin.

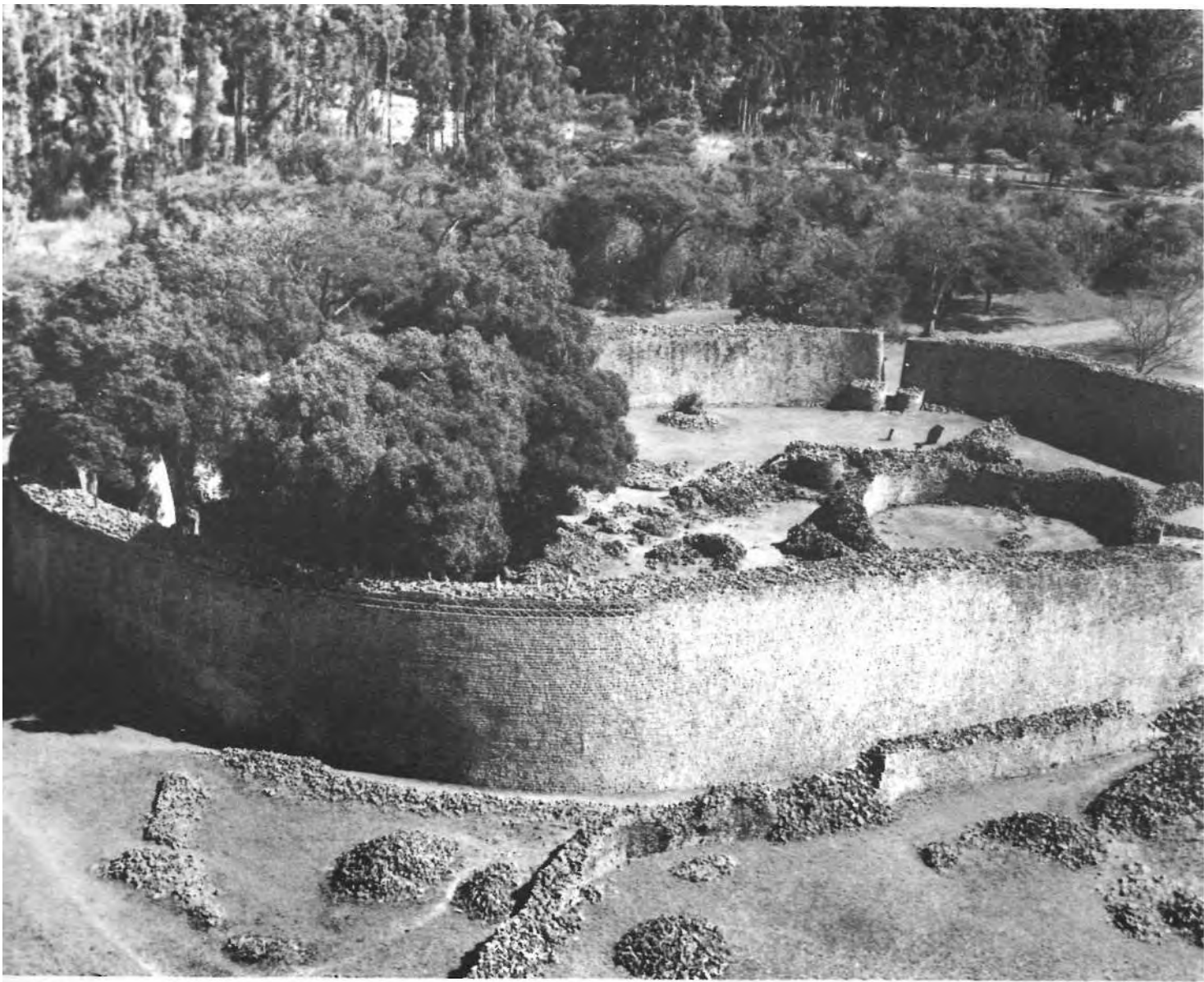
**Page 228** Ground plan of the Central Area of the Dhlo Dhlo Ruins.

**Page 232** Ground Plans of Various Types of Buildings in the Van Niekerk Ruins.

**End paper map** The Principal Wind Systems used by Ancient Mariners between the Chief Ports and Land-falls of Antiquity.

The publishers have been unable to trace the original owners of the following photographs, and would appreciate hearing from the copyright holders so that suitable acknowledgement can be made in subsequent editions. The photographs appear on Pages 72, 75, 133 (top), 143 (top), 145 and 154 (top).

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION



A view of the Temple ruin known as the Great Zimbabwe.



## CHAPTER

# 1

### The Geographical Background of East Africa in Relation to Climate, Movement and Navigation

FOR AN understanding of Zimbabwe we have to consider the civilization of which it was a part as relatively late, when judged by Old World standards. We are, as a result, not concerned with a geographical background which is vastly different from that which exists today. Certain climatic differences would nevertheless exist. The whole of Africa from the Mediterranean coastlands southward to the Sahara, and from Egypt to the Horn of Africa and thence southwards to Mozambique, would have been less dry than it is now. There would have been more woodland, and settlement would have been possible where now it is difficult or impossible. Nevertheless, throughout the period with which we are concerned, from Egypt southwards to the Horn, and thence along the east coast of the continent to South Africa, we are dealing with a dry region which never had in these late post-glacial times any thick and impenetrable forests. It was, as now, a land of savanna and of not very dense bush. In some places, such as the coasts of the Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, northern Somalia, southern Kenya and northern Tanganyika, and again in northern Mozambique, the higher mountain systems tend to approach the coast. Nowhere, however, are there high mountains dominating the coastlands. The great mountain chains run from north to south down east central Africa, approaching the sea at Mombasa, and resuming again the same trend in the mountain system which runs from the Transvaal to the Cape.

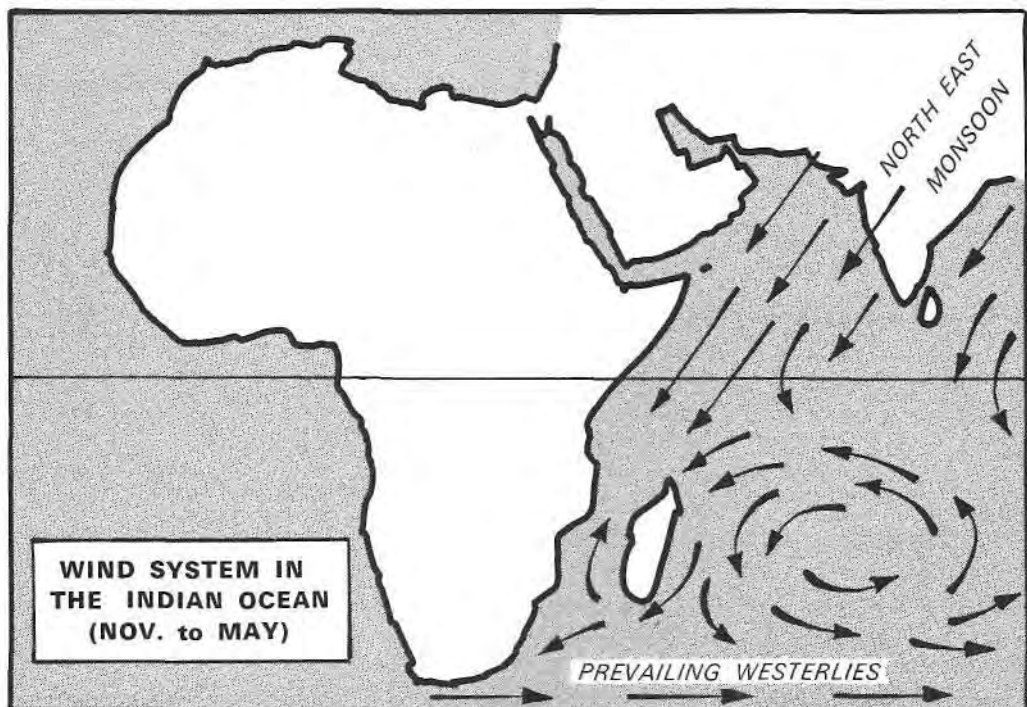
As a consequence of this configuration, there are no great barriers presented to migration from north to south along the whole eastern side of Africa. Only the rivers would provide temporary barriers at each stage of the movement of populations southward. Climate alone is the criterion which can be significant for movement down the east coast. From the Sudan southwards, and again from the Horn of Africa, we are dealing today with very arid inland regions and coasts. Sandhills, which almost resemble deserts, occur in places along the coast of Somalia. This is a region of the goat and the camel. However, these lands are a good deal more arid today than they were only a millennium or so ago. Consequently the earlier we go back in time the easier was it for men to migrate throughout these regions.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

South of Somalia these arid conditions do not exist, and we are dealing with savanna and bushland countries.

Much of the coastland from the middle of the Red Sea southward and eastward, and then south again along the Somaliland coast, has a steppe climate which is generally dry with (from the Horn of Africa southwards) a tropical rain climate immediately inland at the Equator (approximately at the Kenya coast). This climatic zone joins the coast and continues to the south to Mozambique. This gives the savanna type of vegetation marked by a dry season, except where here and there sections of the equatorial rain forest approach the coast.

Even allowing for the fact that the climate was better in earlier historic times than it is now, it is a fact that the whole region from the coast of the Red Sea, which is now desert, southward along the seaboard to approximately the Kenya coast, which is mostly desert with shrubs and scattered thorn forest, must always have been fairly dry land. It is only south of that region that the coastlands become tropical grassland country. The inducement to settle thickly on the coast of East Africa is not very great, except in the areas of the grasslands or where there are small extents of monsoon forest. One finds these areas on parts of the Kenya coast, including those north of Mombasa, which were the sites of early Arab colonisation. This means that any adventurers wishing to establish themselves would have had only isolated areas for settlements where the right conditions occurred, and from whence they could only in certain cases spread out inland. These

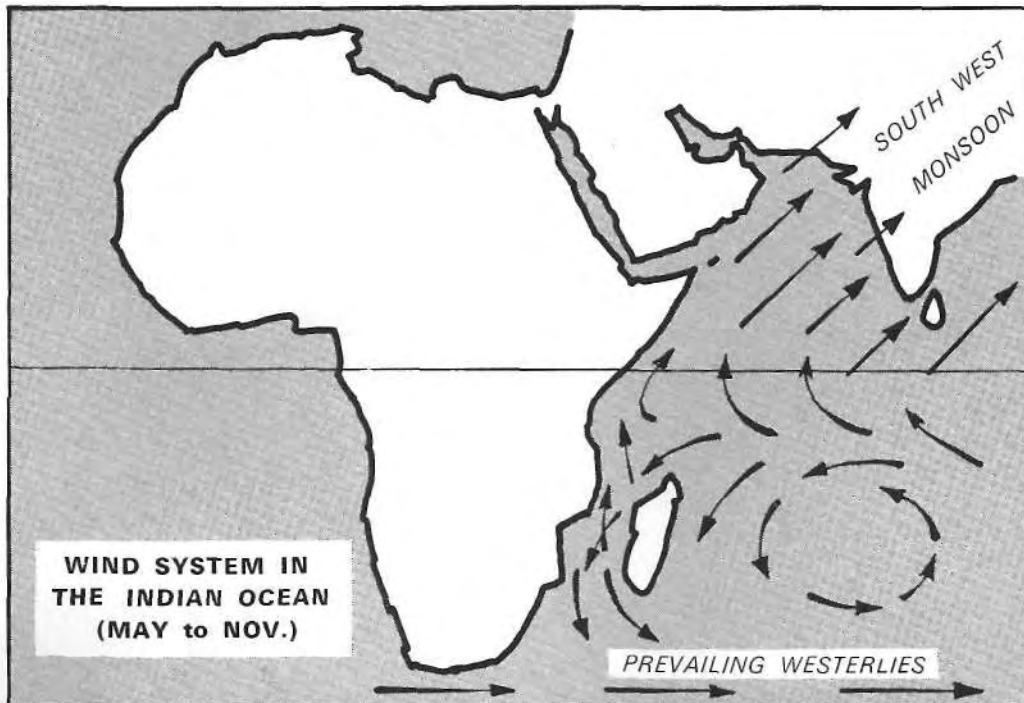


settlements would not have been contiguous, and so communication between them would have been seaborne rather than by land.

Overland movement of migrants to southern Africa would have lain much further to the west than along the coastlands, and would have been along the belts of tropical grassland. These grasslands start south of the Sahara at the west coast of Africa (north of the Gulf of Guinea) and run from west to east, then, at the White Nile, they turn southwards and follow the Rift Valley to Rhodesia.

The wind systems which influence the question of settlement are those associated with the monsoons, as we have already shown elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. There is a north-east and a south-west monsoon. In the latter part of the year the north-east monsoon blows, and in the earlier part the south-west blows. With the former, vessels even of the most primitive kind, and especially if they had lateen rig, could sail before the wind down the coast to about as far as Mombasa, and later could return with the help of the south-east trade winds, until they picked up the south-west monsoon at the Equator. They would then run before this monsoon to Ceylon and India across the Indian Ocean. Using the same monsoonal wind system, they could reach the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

It should be appreciated that early ships were not able to sail against the wind. Down to Roman times the ships were square-rigged with, or without, oars. It was only sailing ships which could normally make long voyages. Galleys, which were largely independent of the wind because they depended





## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

on their oars, required too much in the way of stores to feed and provide water for the crew. They were thus limited in their range. The advantage of movement in any direction provided by the galley was not available to the sailing ship which had to run before the prevailing winds. To some extent the sails could be set in such a way as to allow the ship to make somewhat to leeward or windward, but this was not appreciable. In addition to that, it should also be realised that the Indian ships which played a big part in navigation from China to the coast of East Africa were outriggers. That is, they had the feature which is now being re-developed in the multi-hulled trimaran and catamaran of our times. Such a ship with a square-rigged sail would have even greater difficulty in sailing to windward than the normal single-hulled square-rigger, just as the trimaran is not normally able to be so close-hauled to the wind as the monohull—although with improved design the difference is now in many cases becoming negligible. In ancient times, however, sailors had no option but to sail according to the wind system, always running before the winds and only gaining a little to windward on each leg of the run, except where galleys were concerned. This dictated a course in the Indian Ocean which did not permit tacking across at right angles with the wind coming from the beam.

For this reason alone, any direct crossing of the Indian Ocean to India from the west, as opposed to the long coastal route, inferred a landfall in East Africa. It meant sailing part-way down the coast of East Africa with the north-east monsoon and then with the change of seasons sailing north-eastward with the south-west monsoon. In doing so the mariners would gradually make some modest gains to the eastward. That the monsoon winds were employed we know from the fact that in the first century A.D. the Pilot Hippalus worked out the problems involved in making direct regular passages between India and Egypt by making use of the monsoon winds.

It was not until Roman times that a lateen sail had been developed in the Mediterranean. This may have given rise to the same type of sail used by the Arabs. Only then was the navigator able to some extent to loosen the shackles of his abject slavery to the wind system. Then for the first time he could sail closer to the wind. Even so, it is doubtful if, in such great voyages as those involving the crossing of the Indian Ocean, the struggle which is involved of sailing constantly closely to windward would have had much attraction. Certainly the mariners would sail closer to the wind when they could economically do so, and their control over direction would be greater to the extent that they did so. Yet, in general, they would still wish to utilise to the full the wind directions at the various seasons of the Indian Ocean, making such gains as they could to windward as they did so.

The fact that the Romans once a year sent out large and regular expeditions of as many as 120 ships at a time from Red Sea ports on voyages lasting 40 days to India, suggests that they were using the regular wind systems. Even in our time no sailing master, and now no off-shore yachtsman, would deliberately plan a course which meant a hard beat to windward

all the way. To sail to windward in anything like bad weather is extremely exhausting and it means a wet ship. In such a case water is always shipped over the weather bow in anything but the lightest winds. These earlier voyagers were merchants, with wares to sell, slaves to keep in good condition, as well as passengers to bring safely to their destinations. A vessel constantly awash is not only in danger of mishap, but the health of the people on board and the preservation of their merchandise is at stake. Consequently, even with the coming of the lateen fore-and-aft rigged sail, as distinct from the square-rigged sail, there would be no reason to depart from the general courses which had always been followed. The advantage of the fore-and-aft rig was there, to allow closer windward work, and to work in and out of harbours easily, but it did not then, as it does not now, make the mariner independent of the wind systems. These in the Indian Ocean are quite simple, being based on the south-west monsoon, the north-east monsoon, and the south-east trade winds. This imposes, besides the direct runs north-east to south-west and back, a triangular course as the most economic from all points of view when the Red Sea, East Africa, and India are involved. The three corners of this triangle at their furthest positions are Aden, south-west India, and Madagascar and the Mozambique coast. South of that latter point it was not possible to go because of the powerful Cape Agulhas current against which it was not easy to sail back.

Since the Chinese knew of the Cape of Storms (the Cape of Good Hope) some of these voyagers must from time to time have been swept south to the Cape, and may even have sailed up the west coast. How they got back, if they ever did in their own vessels, is completely conjectural. At the Cape of Good Hope, in winter, the prevailing westerlies set in. These would carry ships eastwards across the southern part of the Indian Ocean, and from a landfall on the eastern shores of this ocean they could work back to India or go on to China. However, they could not sail directly back to India from the Cape of Good Hope, or from most of the east coast of South Africa. The Portuguese sailed up this coast it is true, but by that time their ships (the caravels) were more efficient. They had not only the fore-and-aft sail with the tacking ability which it provides, but they were monohulls. Even so they must always have been faced with hard work to make their course to the north until they reached the latitude of the Arab town of Sofala, in Mozambique, whence the wind system would have carried them northward. It is doubtful if any Chinese junk or Indian merchantman of earlier times could have essayed to do this with any confidence of success.

Other people also had experience of the Cape Agulhas current and its dangers. The early Portuguese explorers were informed by the "Moors" (Arabs) of the coast of East Africa "that they feared the Mozambique current south of Cape Correntes whose grip was known to have swept unwary mariners far to the south and even round the farthest point of Africa." Fra Mauro's map, 1459 A.D., shows the Cape of Good Hope and with it a statement that an Indian ship doubled the Cape into the western ocean in 1420 A.D., while a work published in Paris in 1718<sup>2</sup> states that an Arabic work of

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

the ninth century records that an Arabian ship had been storm-driven from the Arabian seas to the Mediterranean. In the absence of a Suez Canal at that time this was as near a circumnavigation of Africa as could be expected. The Arabs knew of the Southern Atlantic and they called it "The Sea of Darkness".

The records of ancient India tell us that the voyages to the west from India took six months, and the merchants waited until the next year to return on the change of winds<sup>3</sup>. Theoretically they could have turned round and come back on the new monsoon blowing from the opposite direction and so could have completed the voyage in a year. For the voyage from Zanzibar to Malabar, and the reverse, they could have employed for instance, the south-west and north-east monsoon winds respectively. However, that would have given no time for their trade which had been the reason for their crossing the Indian Ocean. In earlier times, and in the more primitive parts of Africa even later, they would have needed extra time to raise crops for their sustenance on the return voyage. Consequently the voyages took 18 months or longer.

It might be objected that early navigation from Arabia throughout the Indian Ocean could not be regularly undertaken on the basis of the wind systems alone, since at the best these would only carry chance voyagers to the various points of destination which we have discussed. The art of navigation also was necessary. This, however, was well-developed at an early period in history. The Polynesians carried out extensive voyages by the stars and there is no reason to doubt that early voyagers in the Indian Ocean used similar methods.

In addition they had other aids to navigation and particularly that of the compass. There is a Chinese reference to the use of the magnet as early as 2634 B.C. By 121 A.D. we have an express mention of the compass in a Chinese dictionary. In a Chinese encyclopaedia covering the period 265-419 A.D. we read of its use in navigation where it says "there were ships directed to the south by a needle".<sup>4</sup>

According to an Arabic manuscript published in Paris by Eusebius Renaudot in 1718, we learn that Chinese ships were trading with people along the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea in the 9th century A.D. A Kai-Tan, a Chinese, wrote a navigation guide of the passage from Canton to the Persian Gulf in the ninth century A.D.<sup>5</sup> We can assume that their possession of the compass was an important factor in making these voyages possible. The Saracen geographer, Edrisi, circa 1100, has reference to the polarity of the magnet, while a European mediaeval treatise entitled *De Utensilibus* written by Alexander Neckam in the 12th century has a definite allusion to the mariner's compass. Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acon, in Palestine, in his *History* (cap. 89), circa 1218, describes the mariner's compass.<sup>6</sup> The work of Bailak Kibjaki, an Arab writer, in his *Merchant's Treasure* of 1282 describes a compass used in the Syrian Seas.<sup>7</sup>

These instances could be multiplied. There seems every reason to say

that the mariner's compass was in common use in the Far East by at least the third century A.D.<sup>8</sup>

Since it is known that there was a trading colony of Sabaeen Arabs (from what is now the Yemen) in Canton at the beginning of the seventh century, and since, according to a learned Chinese authority, Arabic science influenced Chinese astrology, meteorology, and astronomical instruments<sup>9</sup>, it is clear that the Arabs from this great trading power must have been very early in possession of all the necessary navigational aids not merely to reach the coastlands of East Africa but also the Far East. Long before the seventh century A.D. they must have already established themselves there.

Incidentally, there were so many Arab, Persian, and other foreign merchants in China that, in 763 A.D., they banded themselves together to attack and rob the city warehouse in Canton. Such acts as this provided the provocation which led the Chinese at Hangchow in 875 A.D. to put to death foreigners to the number, so it is said, of 26 000.<sup>10</sup>

Even far earlier, during the four thousand years of Egypt's greatness, the regions of eastern and southern Africa could have been reached by expeditions and overland venturers along the savanna and grassland belt, which runs from the Nile southwards along the line of the Rift Valley and leads into what is now Zambia and so to Rhodesia and South Africa. Therefore, we can conclude that East Africa was not the *terra incognita* to the ancient world of the East that it was to Europe.

Before closing this examination of the navigational factors involved in long distance voyaging from the Red Sea coasts, it is as well to realise that the ancients had enormous ships capable of moving vast quantities of merchandise. The ones of which we have the best records are galleys. These, naturally, suffered from the difficulties we have indicated, that, while capable of moving large cargoes, they could only have been used on relatively short passages, as in the Mediterranean. It is unlikely that they could have been efficient from Saba, in South-West Asia to India and beyond. On the other hand, they might well have been used in the western Indian Ocean, or further east, for the shorter passages to the various ports established by Sabaeans, Persians, and Indians. In any event, if galleys were not regularly employed, the fact that galleys existed as described in the following account, indicates that the ancients had the technical ability to build large ships. Thus their square-rigged long distance vessels must have been of considerable burthen on occasions, and so capable of carrying large numbers of slaves, settlers, merchants and their merchandise.

"In 315 B.C. the Phoenician shipyards constructed for Antigonus a vessel which needed 1 800 men to row it, with thirteen men to each oar. The biggest wooden ship of the pre-Christian era was the war galley built by Ptolemy IV towards the end of the second century B.C. and 'it was 400 feet long and 50 feet wide, the figure heads on prow and stern towered more than 70 feet above the water and there were no less than 4 000 rowers manning its benches; the thranite oars (upper bank of oars) were mighty sweeps 57 feet long'."<sup>11</sup>

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

"Merchantmen of the Hellenistic Age also increased in size and the average cargo was three hundred tons or larger. There is a description preserved of one leviathan which could hold as many as 1600 tons—so big in fact that only a few ports such as Piraeus or Rhodes had the facilities to handle it."<sup>12</sup>

During the Roman era, the big grain ships on the Rome-Alexandria run were carrying cargoes of up to 1 200 tons. Lucian, the famous Greek writer of the second century A.D., has described one of these vessels which was blown off course and entered the harbour of Piraeus. Of this he says:

"What a size the ship was! 180 feet in length, the ship's carpenter told me, the beam more than a quarter of that, and 44 feet from the deck to the lowest point in the hold. And the height of the mast, and what a yard it carried, and what a fore-stay they had to use to hold it up! And the way the stern rose up in a gradual curve ending in a gilded goose head, matched at the other end by the forward, more flattened, sweep of the prow with its figure of Isis, the goddess the ship was named after, on each side. Everything was incredible, the rest of the decoration, the paintings, the red topsail, even more, the anchors with their capstans and winches, and the cabins aft. The crew was like an army. They told me she carried enough grain to feed every mouth in Athens for a year, and it all depends for its safety on one little old man who turns those great steering oars with a tiller that is no more than a stick! They pointed him out to me, a woolly haired little fellow, half bald. Heron was his name I think."

This vessel, according to Casson<sup>13</sup>:

"held three times as much cargo as any merchantman that plied between Europe and America before 1820; it was not until 1845 that the North Atlantic saw a ship its size. If all employed on the run were the size of the Isis, Rome needed a fleet of about 85 to ferry the 150,000 tons she took yearly from Egypt".

In *The Life of Flavius Josephus*, Paragraph 3, this Jewish historian of the first century A.D. tells us that when 26 years of age he took a voyage to Rome, and says:

"Accordingly I came to Rome, though it were through a great number of hazards, by sea; for, as our ship was drowned in the Adriatic Sea, we that were in it, being about six hundred in number, swam for our lives all night."

The ship in which St. Paul sailed for Rome, which was wrecked in St. Paul's Bay, Malta, was quite a small vessel in comparison. Even so, he tells us: "And we were in all the ship two hundred three-score and sixteen souls." (*Acts*, 27 v. 37.)

The facts we have received make it clear that the Indian Ocean was not a *mare incognitum* to the ancient civilised peoples of Europe and Asia and that they had the technical ability to exploit the raw materials of its coastlands. It is essential to grasp these facts. It is because they have not

been fully realised in the past, and because we have been obsessed with European-orientated thinking of the opening up of a "Dark Continent" by European missionaries and explorers, coming from the west, that we have failed to realise that Africa was not a Dark Continent to the civilised peoples of antiquity.

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13. *Ibid*, p.235.

## CHAPTER

# 2

### East Africa: its Exploration and Trade with the Outside World

THE PENETRATION of Africa was taking place from an early period. The Egyptian Pharaohs Sahu-Ra (5th Dynasty, *circa* 3300 B.C.) and Menuhotep III (who was of the 11th Dynasty<sup>1</sup>, *circa* 2500 B.C.) sent ships to the Land of Punt.<sup>1</sup> This land is usually considered to be between the southern Red Sea and East Africa. D. B. Doe, Director of Antiquities, Aden, placed it in Somaliland.<sup>2</sup> There is also an Egyptian papyrus in Turin Museum which is a thousand years older than that of Anaximander (610 to *circa* 545 B.C.) who is considered to be the Greek inventor of cartography. Therefore it dates from about 1600 B.C. This map shows a gold-mining district in Nubia. This, incidentally, also emphasises the importance the ancient world placed upon the exploitation of gold.<sup>3</sup>

Some idea of the importance of gold is clear from the fact that in the Mediterranean civilisation there was a great demand for gold, and the people had to turn to Egypt for it. The correspondence found in the Amarna Archives indicates how concerned all the kings were to obtain this metal. Thus Duschratta of the Mitanni, a contemporary of the Pharaoh Akhnaten, reported that in Egypt gold was "like dust beneath the feet". The Egyptians had to pay their mercenaries in gold. Thus Ahmose, son of Ebne, was awarded the "gold of bravery" for his assistance in helping to overthrow the Hyksos conquerors of Egypt (1730-1580 B.C.). In the Mycenaean shaft-graves about 33 lbs of gold objects were found. There is every probability that much of this came from Egypt. Later still, Mycenae was noted for its richness in gold, and Homer called her **Πολύχρυσος** that is, rich in gold.<sup>4</sup>

The sources of this gold, at first, would have been those nearest at hand. These are to be found at Havilah (mentioned in the Garden of Eden account in *Genesis*) which was said to be rich in gold and is believed to have been in Arabia, and in Nubia. Far distant countries such as Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, would have been sources exploited later by the Phoenicians. But with the enormous demand of these high civilisations of the Mediterranean and Babylonia, added to the great demands made by India, other and nearer sources of supply would be needed very early. Abyssinia,





Western part of the map of the world, *At/ante Mediceo*, 1351, or the *Portolano Laurenziano Gadiano*, showing that Africa was known to be able to be circumnavigated (except for its narrow land junction with Asia) nearly 150 years before the Portuguese discovered the Cape route to India.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

the Land of Punt (Somalia) and more distant lands in Africa would have been brought into the development and trade of the civilised world when gold was found and exploited there.

The earliest European intimation we have that the eastern coastlands of Africa must have been visited by civilised people is contained in an account by Herodotus, who tells us that the Pharaoh of Egypt, Necho (Neku II, B.C. 611), sent out an expedition under the command of Phoenicians to circumnavigate the continent of Africa, which they did. This was the first Caucasoid contact with the African shorelines (other than those of North Africa and on the east coast as far as the Land of Punt) of which we have any record. This was the Pharaoh who attempted to complete the connection of the Red Sea with the Nile by means of a canal, and thence, by means of that river, with the Mediterranean. He was a king who was seriously interested in forwarding mercantile discovery and development. The account by Herodotus of this circumnavigation of Africa, which it is recorded was accomplished through Necho, is entirely consistent with this. As C. G. and Collete Picard<sup>5</sup> say, this was the most extraordinary maritime expedition before the great discoveries of the sixteenth century of our era. In support of the fact that the circumnavigation of Africa was known, at least to a limited number of people, we find that this is proved by an early map dated 1351 in the Biblioteca Laurenzia, in Florence—the *Atlante Mediceo* or *Portolano Laurenzano*. This chart shows Africa as a triangle with its base along the Mediterranean and its apex to the south. The proportions of the various indentations are inaccurate, as must be expected, but the Gulf of Guinea, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean are clearly identifiable. There is no doubt that by the Middle Ages most seamen in Europe would treat such a map with scepticism. The fact that such a map existed at all is valuable support for the circumnavigation of Africa. This was first recorded under Necho II, and subsequently in at least one other (Arabian) case, before the Portuguese in the fifteenth century opened the sea route to India as a result of the inspiration of Henry the Navigator.\*

Hanno (*circa* 570 B.C.), according to the *Periplus*, sailed westwards through the Straits of Gibraltar down the west coast of Africa with 60 galleys (*pentecontoroi*) and 30,000 men and women. He founded Thymiaterium, and settled colonies at Gytte, Acra, Melitta, Arambys, and in the islands of Cerne or Kerne. The end of the voyage was an island beyond a gulf called Noti Cornu, where they found "hairy women"<sup>6</sup> whom the interpreters named gorillas. This seems to have been the first occasion, of which we have record, of white people coming into contact with anthropoid apes. It is interesting to observe that they thought they were some form of human beings. The venturers having made contact with strange naked creatures so unlike themselves among the Negroes, who were undoubtedly human,

\*The *Mining Survey* (Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, 1956), informs us that Egyptian coins of the reign of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, more than 2 000 years ago, were found by a Mr. Thomas Cook, in a native village of Port Grosvenor in an earthenware pot. This suggests continued interest in Southern Africa, after the time of Necho II.

these gorilla "women" were, for them, only one step further away in strangeness from themselves, and so they designated them hairy women—no doubt to distinguish them from black women.

Arising from this expedition there developed a profitable Phoenician gold trade with West Africa, which throws light on the motives of such expeditions as this one sent out by Hanno.

Xerxes (470 B.C.) gave orders that the circumnavigation of Africa which had been effected by the Phoenicians under Necho II, should be repeated in the opposite direction. Whether this was actually attempted we do not know.

The Phoenicians found their way to the Azores and Madeira, which was part of the outward penetration of white peoples from the Mediterranean which ultimately embraced much of Africa. It was part of this restless maritime activity which brought the same Phoenician stock, under Himilco, 470 B.C., to the British Isles. This exploration was followed by the Greek Pytheas of Massillia, 330 B.C., to the same coastlands. It was the Phoenicians (or Tyrians) who traded with the Land of Ophir, from whence Solomon drew rich merchandise after he had formed an alliance with Hiram King of Tyre. It was a region celebrated for fine gold, and from whence Solomon derived that metal and also precious stones. Its location has been in much doubt. Some have suggested Abhira, at the mouth of the Indus; Suhara, in Goa, India; Mount Ophir in Johore; Southern Arabia; and finally in Rhodesia. The fact is that it was some country on the shores of the Indian Ocean. If it was not the land from whence the gold was derived, Ophir must have been an *entrepot*, probably in India or Southern Arabia. Since there can be little doubt that Rhodesia or the adjoining country of Mozambique was the most prolific source of gold among all these places suggested, it is hard to escape the conclusion that it was probably the ultimate source.

That the Phoenicians circumnavigated Africa from west to east, as they had done under Necho II from east to west, seems certain. For Poseidonius tells in the story of Eudoxos, as retold by the geographer Strabo, that Eudoxos of Cysicus (110 B.C.) was sent by Cleopatra to India. On his return he was blown off course, to the south, on to the coast of East Africa, where he found a wreck. This had a horse-head prow, which he identified as Phoenician from Gades. This proved to Eudoxos that Africa had been circumnavigated from the western Mediterranean.<sup>7</sup>

That Ophir is unlikely to have been in Southern Arabia is inherent within the text of *I Kings*, X, verses 11-15. For it is mentioned as quite separate from the gold derived from the kings and governors of Arabia. Furthermore, the quantity mentioned is enormous. Listed with the gold imports there is the import of almug wood. In Ferrar Fenton's translation we read: ". . . the ships of Khiram which brought gold from Aufer brought also from Aufer almug wood." He translates, in a footnote, *almug wood* as the Arabic *kalmak*, which is sandalwood.<sup>8</sup>

The chief source of sandalwood has been India, but it should be noted that it has been exported also from Zanzibar. It does not seem to have been

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

exported from Arabia. Consequently we are encouraged to look beyond Arabia for the location of Ophir.

Furthermore the fleet of Solomon, which appears to have ventured in concert with that of Hiram, King of Tyre, took three years to return. On this basis alone one would expect the destination to have been far beyond Arabia (from whence they could have returned in weeks) and that at the very least it was Mozambique or India, perhaps on the triangular course we have indicated the wind systems dictated. These ships brought gold, silver, ivory, and peacocks, which would be the combined products of the coast of East Africa and of southern India. The likelihood, on the basis of the historical facts, of Rhodesia and Mozambique being identified with the products of the ancient land of Ophir is therefore very strong indeed.

However, if we come to examine the matter in greater detail, allowing the known facts their full value, the identification of Ophir as a place in India becomes almost a certainty. This would also seem to be confirmed from the fact that according to G. M. Theal the word for peacock, which was one of the valuable things brought from Ophir is Tamil, and, therefore, South Indian.<sup>9</sup>

It is relevant to observe that in the important ethnography of *Genesis* X, verse 29, Ophir is linked with Havilah, and mentioned next after Sheba, among the peoples of Shem. These are racially Nordo-Armenoid-Mediterranean peoples. This is consistent with a location lying in the region of Southern Arabia to India. Consequently it reinforces the view that Ophir lay to the east—that is in India—rather than in Africa.

The known facts are: the navigational conditions for sailing crafts from the Red Sea ports; the fact which we can assume that there were not yet well-established ports all the way down the coast of East Africa to Sofala as existed a thousand years later; and the extent of the voyages which took three years.

The wind systems which we have discussed provide, in our opinion, the solution as to the identification of the Land of Ophir from which King Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre, three thousand years ago brought their rich cargoes of gold, spices and other precious wares every three years.

The navies of Tyre, Israel, and Saba passed down the coast of East Africa (for all these voyages seem to have taken in Punt, Somalia) before the north-east monsoon until they reached Madagascar. Here they traded, refitted (itself a lengthy business involving hauling ashore and renewing timbers), and provisioned. This latter operation was no easy matter, in days before there were the later established cities of Kilwa, Lamu, Malindi, Gedi and the rest right down to Sofala, with their merchants and markets. In the earliest periods, and we may well be near the beginning of the contact with this coast at one thousand B.C. or before, it would mean sowing crops, growing them, and then reaping. In addition, gold was the magnet. This meant panning for gold in the lower reaches of the rivers, such as the Sabi.

More than a whole year would be involved before it was possible to make

sail with the south-west monsoon for India. Here, refitting would once more be involved and trade would have to be undertaken, which was not a hurried matter in those days. Thus it would be the third year before they sailed, with the aid of the north-east monsoon, for the Red Sea.

The port from which these mariners came was Ophir, and that was the *entrepot* in India where they traded gold (for which India had a great demand) for the peacocks and spices they brought back with them. The source of the gold was Mozambique but the market for gold was Ophir, and that could have been nowhere else than in India. The facts of navigation make no other place possible. It is the three year period which provides the evidence, for, with the wind system involved, it could be no other.

Below is a hypothetical example of the passages possible. It will be seen that it would be in the third year that the landfall would be made at the Arabian coast. The sailors would then work their way up this coast with the aid of local off and on shore winds from port to port until they reached the port of Elath in the Gulf of Aqaba.

<b>Year 1</b>	N.E. Monsoon	November	Sail down the coast to Mozambique.
		February	Arrive in Mozambique, and refit vessels.
	S.W. Monsoon	May	Panning for gold. Do as much "trade" and exploitation as was possible.
<b>Year 2</b>	N.E. Monsoon	November	Sow crops.
		February	Reap crops. Make ready to sail.
	S.W. Monsoon	May	Sail for India.
		July	Arrive in India.
		August/October	Refit, trade.
<b>Year 3</b>	N.E. Monsoon	November/January	Sail for Somalia.
		February/March	Arrive Somalia.
	S.W. Monsoon	May	Sail for Arabia.
		June/July	Reach the Gulf of Aqaba, home port of the Tyrian and Israelite fleets.

It seems to us that the congruence of this sailing period which we are specifically told was taken up by the voyages, and the wind systems which dictate how the Indian Ocean can be traversed both ways, make it certain that as early as 1000 B.C. mariners were becoming acquainted with the coast of East Africa. Since India was always an importer of gold and not an exporter, it means that these passages had to include a gold-rich country. The only one of any consequence along these sailing routes was Mozambique with its hinterland of Rhodesia.

Milton wrote: "Mombassa, Quiloa and Melissa, and Sofala (thought Ophir) to the realm of Congo and Angola farthest south".

This indicates that the idea that Sofala was Ophir was well established

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

by the seventeenth century, and must have come from much earlier Arab sources. However, this misconception would arise because Sofala was on the way to Ophir in India. It was impossible to voyage to and from Ophir without making a principal landfall at Sofala. It has been suggested that the septuagint translation of Ophir as Sophira indicates Sofala. However, this is much closer to Suhara the Indian port near Goa. Josephus' testimony confirms this as he calls Ophir '*Indian Ophir*'.

We have to reach the end of the pre-Christian period and the commencement of our era before we begin to get information bearing further on this subject, although it is inconceivable, once the Phoenicians had made the circumnavigation, that these coasts remained unvisited and unexploited, at least to some extent.

Although the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Hebrews belonged to the same racial stock as the people of Europe, and, indeed, formed a part of the same general civilisation of the Mediterranean world, we have to wait until we come to discuss Greek and Roman exploration before we are dealing with that which can be strictly called a European penetration of the Indian Ocean.

Evidence of Greek contact with the Indian Ocean is provided by the fact that there was regular merchandise passing backwards and forwards to India. Among such contacts were the bringing of Greek slaves by merchants travelling between Africa and India for the harems of India.<sup>10\*</sup> Greek coins of Alexander the Great of Macedon have even been found in the Philippine Islands.<sup>11</sup>

The Romans, following the same courses as the Greeks, established emporia at various points on the Indian coast, the most important of which was at Virampatnam-Arikamodu, near what was later Pondicherry, as has been proved by excavations.<sup>12</sup> This trade was not unimportant as it called for imperial notice. We find that the Emperor Vespasian (68-79 A.D.) forbade the export of gold to India to stop the drain on the Empire's financial resources.<sup>13</sup> The Romans had an adverse balance of trade with India, which made the huge sum of fifty million sesterces a year out of the trade, according to Pliny the Elder.<sup>14</sup> This trade accounts for the occurrence of the ivory statuette of the Indian goddess Lakshmi at Pompeii.<sup>15</sup>

From Roman times onwards merchant shipping was very active in trade connected with India, and it linked the Mediterranean to places as far away as China.<sup>16</sup> From the beginning of the Christian era there was a regular service between Rome and the coast of Malabar, and between India and China.

We know that Aelius Gallus, the Roman Prefect of Egypt in the time of Augustus Caesar invaded the Yemen on the Arabian side of the southern coasts of the Red Sea in 24 B.C. with an army of 10 000 Roman infantry, 500 Jews, and 1 000 Nabothians, and that he transported his army in 210

\*Eric A. Walker, states that the Rumi, Greek-speaking Roman merchants, not only sailed regularly to India but possibly as far as the Comoro Islands. (*Arabs and East Coast Africa*. London: Longmans Green, 1957, p.2.)

galleys and landed near the modern Yambo. He had, in the end, to retire because of the sickness of his troops in that hot arid climate. However, the fact that he could deploy a sizeable army, supported by 210 galleys, in the southern part of the Red Sea means that there is the possibility of his predecessors, himself, or his successors, having penetrated further down the coast. An extension thence to the Indian Ocean was obviously within relatively easy range, and so was open to the Romans.

It is of importance to note that *The Peripulus* tells us that the Sabaean King Kharabit, in A.D. 35, was in possession of the eastern coast of Africa "to an indefinite extent."\*

Ptolemy's map of the world shows clearly the shape of East Africa. This indicates that by 150 A.D. East Africa was well known. Rhodesia and Mozambique are called Agisymba, and lay south of the "Mountains of the Moon".<sup>17</sup>

A factor which ought not to be overlooked is that all seafaring trading fraternities tended to maintain considerable secrecy about their sources of wealth. Consequently, although the names of certain sources would be known, little in the way of detail would be divulged. This we believe is one of the principal reasons why a great gold-producing land or *entrepot* such as Ophir, or the sources from whence the gold came, could be known without any material facts as to location and routes being given. The Phoenicians appear to have been particularly secretive in their business. Constance Irwin<sup>18</sup> says that they:

"gave no thought of proclaiming discoveries, being less concerned with their public image than their private profits. Theirs was, in fact, a conspiracy of silence. Although they disseminated culture along with the more profitable items of trade, they never shared information regarding trade routes, markets, or winds and currents. The routes were their road to riches, and as such were shielded from prying potential competitors".

The Indians carried on an active trade with East Africa, as all archaeological investigations and the accounts of the Portuguese make clear. It was so intimate that even products such as ghee (clarified butter) had a market in East Africa.<sup>19</sup>

By the twelfth century A.D. we have a European writer and explorer in Marco Polo, who was born at Venice in 1254 of a noble Venetian family. His own explorations were directed to Asia. Nevertheless he had a very wide interest, and he made it his business to learn something of the coast-land of East Africa, the knowledge of which was quite clearly from Arab sources. Therefore, his thirteenth century account reflects (whether garbled or not) Arab conceptions of the east coasts of Africa of an even earlier period. He does not treat extensively of them, but what he says is of some importance.

\*This was pointed out by J. Theodore Bent, as early as 1895 (*Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, London: Longmans Green, p.229). Eric A. Walker accepts the validity of this statement and says:—"A certain King Kharabit of Saba (Sheba) had interests far down the East Coasts in the days of Trajan A.D. 100." (*Arabs and East Coast Africa*. London: Longmans Green, 1957, p.2.)



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

For instance he tells us that Abyssinia was rich in gold.<sup>20</sup> The editor of the edition of these travels from which we quote, in a footnote points out that modern writers do not speak of this country as being rich in this metal, "yet, as the adjoining coasts of Africa have at all periods been celebrated for the production of gold, it is reasonable to suppose that, during the flourishing days of the empire, it may have been collected there from the southward, in large quantities, and at a price to afford considerable profit when disposed of to the merchants of Arabia. '*On trouve,*' says Nieburr, in his description of the latter country, '*beaucoup d'or de Habbesch dans les villes bien commerçantes.*'"

We have seen there was an overland route to the south along the Nile and consequently Ethiopia must have had an interest in the merchandise which could be derived from Rhodesia and other gold-rich countries of the south. Therefore, the inference must be that Ethiopia was an *entrepot* for gold and other precious products of central and southern Africa, much in the same way as was Khartoum (and as it remained until the nineteenth century) for slaves brought out by Arab raiders from Central Africa.

This ancient way to the south was a well-established slave route the paths of which were still visible across the Northern Frontier District of Kenya a hundred years ago, leading ultimately to a destination at Lake Nyasa.

More important were Marco Polo's pieces of information concerning the Arab countries. He tells us that Aden was frequented by many ships coming from India laden with spices and drugs.<sup>21</sup> These were trans-shipped into smaller vessels and brought to the African side of the Red Sea. From there the wares were loaded onto camels, and it took thirty days to journey overland to the River Nile, whence they were conveyed to Cairo and eventually to Alexandria and the Mediterranean. This gives some idea of the widespread mercantile arrangements which were involved in this sea-borne trade of the Indian Ocean.

Marco Polo goes on to tell us that Zanzibar lies beyond Madagascar. This is usually taken to be evidence that Marco Polo's information was of a very faulty nature, and that he, or his immediate informant, had misunderstood the relative positions of Madagascar and the nearby Mozambique coast, and Zanzibar and the adjacent Kenyan and Tanganyikan shores. However, this is not necessarily the case, if his information was from Indian-Arab sources, such as from those available on the Malabar coast. This is more than likely in view of the fact that he was better acquainted with Asia than with Africa. Consequently, he would most probably have got his information from Moslems in the course of his travels to China. If this were so, his statement would be perfectly true. For at certain seasons of the year (between November and May) the north-east monsoon would carry the dhows to the south of the Equator. There they would pick up the trade winds which would be blowing towards the west and west-south-west, and, ultimately to the south-west. Such winds would bring them to Madagascar as their

first landfall. After that, in the succeeding part of the year (May to November) they would have the advantage of the same winds which would bring them to Zanzibar, and then with the aid of the south-west monsoon they would return to India.

When we consider these facts it is almost certain that Marco Polo was obtaining absolutely true information from Indian-based Arabic sources.

Marco Polo describes Zanzibar, and what is clearly the coastlands on the mainland of Africa which were formerly always included with Zanzibar. These territories which are now the coasts of Kenya and Tanganyika were known to the Arabs as the land of the Zenj, Zing or Zang, which to them meant in later times, if not earlier, that of the Negroes. The name Zanzibar is quite obviously related to this word.

Although there is ample evidence that these coastlands were occupied by Arabs, nevertheless the native stock over whom they ruled, whose type they infiltrated with their own blood, and whose culture they influenced with their own, was substantially *Zing* or Negroid. When seen from the European point of view, Marco Polo's description of these peoples has all the ring of authenticity. He tells us that the native inhabitants were capable of carrying huge loads (a characteristic of the Negro race as a whole, whether of the women or of the men, as we find them used by other peoples as their porters): they were naked blacks: they had crisp (that is woolly) hair: they had large mouths and upturned flat noses: of their women he tells us that they had thick (that is flat) noses, and ill-favoured breasts four times as large as other (that is Caucasoid and Mongoloid) women. This latter feature is undoubtedly exaggerated, but the fact remains that Negroid women have long pendulous breasts which are quite different from the hemispherical shape of those of the Caucasoid and Mongoloid women. In view of such detailed accuracy in his description, considering it was not received at first hand from his own experience, his account is worthy of credence in other respects also.

He tells us that many trading ships visited these coasts and they traded in ivory, ambergris, and suchlike wares.<sup>22</sup>

In discussing Madagascar,<sup>23</sup> Marco Polo gives us the very important information that the strength of the (Cape Agulhas) current between Madagascar and Mozambique sets the approximate limit for sailing to the south. This is true, since it is very difficult to beat back to the north to pick up the trade winds and the south-west monsoon. The fact that he knew of this current once again sets the seal of authenticity on the main facts of his narrative. The current runs so fast in places that the sailing vessel of those days could make no headway against it even with favourable winds. Consequently, it is clear that by this time the east coast of Africa was so well explored and known that not only the mariners themselves were aware of this current, but the existence of it could be transmitted to travellers such as Marco Polo, who, as far as we know, never set foot in Africa.

In his description of Madagascar Marco Polo tells us that the inhabitants

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

were Moslems. This was not strictly true, except for the coastal people in the ports and trading centres.

The people of Madagascar were, originally, a Malayo-Polynesian people, and today they have some Negro admixture, apart from the settlement of Arabs in their midst. They have a trace of lighter-coloured aborigines, just as the Cappoids in Africa have preceded the other stocks and are lighter-skinned. The Arab contact with Madagascar dates from an early period. Some ruling clans are of Arabic descent in the north-west and south-eastern coastal areas, and some Arabic is known in the south-east. However they have now lost their separate identity. In addition, in the north-west there are actually Arab colonies with their own religion and language. Curiously enough, in this area there is also an Indian element. However, returning to Marco Polo's statement that the Malagasy were Moslems, this is true to the extent that it was only in these Moslems that both he and his informants were primarily interested. He was informed that these coasts were visited regularly by ships from various parts of the world. This would infer that not only Arabs but other nations were involved in the trade.\*

From the account of Marco Polo alone, it is clear that the east coast of Africa, from the Red Sea to Mozambique and Madagascar, was already well-known; its seas were frequently sailed, and its ports constantly visited by ships of different nations from all parts of the world. We are not dealing with a *terra incognita* such as might have been the case of the west coast of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Angola. The fact that our European literature speaks little of these lands, their peoples, ports, and towns, should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that other nations from Arabia to India, and probably beyond, had an intimate association with these coasts and their trade. We are apt to forget that mediaeval Europe was not the only civilised part of the world. The curious thing is that the abysmal ignorance of the mediaeval European, which lasted until the coming of the Portuguese to the Indian Ocean, has affected our understanding and judgement. We too readily assume that these were unknown savage lands before the arrival of the Portuguese. The facts we have now cited show that the opposite is the case.

Knowing, as we do, that by the time the Portuguese arrived in India the trade had very largely become dominated by the Arabs, and the ports of western India were linked with those of the east coast of Africa, such as Malindi and Zanzibar, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the earlier Roman ventures, which had penetrated so far beyond India as to reach China, must also have taken in East Africa as well. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise in view of the wind and current systems, which would make it inevitable that any trade from Aden to India must have formed part of a triangle, one side of which was East Africa to Aden.

\*It takes an effort to appreciate that such places as Madagascar were more intimately in touch with the civilized world than we would tend to think. Evidence of this fact is shown by the mention in Arab literature of the Great Roc, which is the now extinct Dodo of Madagascar. (Sharp, Andrew. *Ancient Voyagers in the Pacific*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books 1957, p.117).

At the same time the Indian princes maintained their own fleets which competed with those of Greece, Rome, Iran, the Arabs, and China. India set up her own trading ports in countries of the southern seas and eventually reached the limit of her expansion towards the south-east in Borneo and the Celebes.<sup>24</sup> These were formidable voyages and enterprises, in comparison with which the contact we know the Indians had with East Africa was quite

It is also of significance (despite the European's general ignorance of the Indian Ocean before the arrival of the Portuguese) that the region of the Zambezi and its course was known to the mediaeval geographers. The positions of Lakes N'gami and Nyasa were filled in with a rude approximation to accuracy in the earlier maps. These were probably constructed from Arab information.<sup>25</sup> This is not at all surprising when we remember that the great Arab travellers and writers, such as Masudi (943 A.D.), Idris (1150 A.D.), and Ibn Batuta (who lived from 1304-78 and whose full name was Abu-Abdullah Mahommed) actually record their visits and accounts of the east coast of Africa from Mombasa and Kilwa southwards to Sofala.

Masudi, (943 A.D.) tells us that the Moslems of Oman in Arabia, of the Al-Azd tribe, sailed on the Zang (Zing or Zenj) Sea as far south as Kanbalu, Madagascar, and to Sofala (Sufalah) in the land of the Wak-Wak<sup>26</sup> who, as we have shown elsewhere, were Khoisan peoples, either Bushmen or Hottentots.<sup>27</sup> Shortly afterwards Idris (1150 A.D.) tells us that Sofala (Sufalah) bordered on the land of the Wak-Wak. These were said to be "horrible aboriginals" whose speech resembled whistling.<sup>28</sup> This, incidently, suggests that between the tenth and the twelfth centuries the Bantu Zenj had displaced the Khoisan Wak-Wak people as far as the district of Sofala is concerned.\*

That the Hottentots were known to the Arab geographers, who called them the Wak-Wak people, is absolutely certain. For the Hottentots have as one of their names for themselves Quae Quae and another is Kwekhena. Even if we assume that the Hottentots had a much more northerly distribution a millennium ago than in modern times, this indicates that the Arabs had gone some considerable distance down the coast to the point at which they came in contact with them. It shows that they had penetrated sufficiently far inland to have such an intimate knowledge of these people that they were able thus to designate them by a term quite distinct from that of Zenj, which they used at this time for the Negroes.

Another evidence of constant and deep penetration of East Africa is seen in the creation of the half-breed Swahili Moslem. *Swahili* (Wa-Swahili, i.e. the "Coast People" from Arabic *Sahil coast*) is applied to former subjects of the Sultanate of Zanzibar who speak Ki-Swahili. They are of mixed Bantu-Arab stock of which about a quarter is Arab. The language is mixed

\*Obviously the speech being said to be of a "whistling" nature is because it was unlike anything the Arabs had heard before. This seems to establish that they were listening to the peculiar *clicks* of the Khoisan languages, associated with The Bushmen.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Bantu and Arabic, with, from later sources, some Portuguese. Of the Swahili one writer has written: "The energy and intelligence derived from a large infusion of Semitic blood has enabled them to take a leading part in the development of trade and industries, as shown in the wide diffusion of their language, which, like Hindustani in India and Gaurani in South America, has become the principal medium of intercommunication throughout most of the continent south of the equator".<sup>29</sup> For instance, Commander Cameron found he could use it from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, enabling him to dispense with an interpreter.

The Maneno Unguya dialect of Swahili of Zanzibar is the most affected by Arabic, Persian, Indian and other foreign elements. These Swahili-speaking peoples appear to have been known as the Zenj. From earliest times of which there is any authentic record, from Somalia southwards the coast was that of the Zenj (Zang), whose rulers claimed to be "Sovereigns of the Sea." From them the seaboard took the name of Zanguebar,\* and the Arabs knew it as Balid-ez-Zenj, Land of the Zenj. *Zanguebar* corresponds to Hindu-bar, the land of the Hindu, given to the west coast of India. Thus Zanzibar means Land of the *Zang*, *Zenj* or Swahili Moslems. This is confirmed by the fact that Ibn Batuta, and other Arab writers, say the Zenj people themselves were Moslem Negroes (in other words, Swahili or Coast People.)

How considerable was the Islamic influence on this coast is shown by the fact that when the Portuguese conquered this coast in 1505 we find that Kilwa had the enormous number of 300 mosques. Even earlier, Mombasa was called "the Magnificent", and Malindi and Mogadishu "the Immense" according to Ibn Batuta.

While we are discussing the Arab settlements along the East African coast it is as well to say that it was a firm Arab tradition that Ophir might well have been there. Thomas Lopez (1502) visited Sofala, as the Reverend Father Marconnes reminds us<sup>30</sup> where:

"the Moorish merchants were telling us that in Sofala there is a wonderfully rich mine to which, as they find in their books, King Solomon used to send every three years to draw an infinite quantity of gold".

It should be observed that the Arabs used the name Sofala not only for the town of that name, but also for the whole region between the Zambezi and the Limpopo.

It is our considered view that Ophir (which was the land from which Solomon drew his gold, and from which his ships came every three years) is more likely to have been where we have placed it, that is, in India. But this was an *entrepot* through which the gold came. If, as we believe, it was from Sofala-land, then the name of Ophir might well have come to be extended to it in the traditions of the Arabs, without that land, in fact, being Ophir.

The same tradition from Arabic sources is repeated by the Dominican Joao dos Santos (1609) who lived and worked among the people of this

\*Mispronounced by the Indian Traders as Zanzibar.

region. He tells us that on top of these mountains there still exist remains of old walls, and some old ruins. The people of these lands, and especially some old Moors who have preserved a tradition of their ancestors, say these houses were in older times the trading depots of the Queen of Sheba (Saba), and that from these depots they used to bring to her much gold, following the rivers of Cuama (Zambezi) down to the Ethiopian Coast up to the Red Sea. They entered the Red Sea and sailed to the shores which touch Egypt and there they used to off-load all this gold which was brought by land to the Court of the Queen of Sheba.<sup>31</sup>

We might also mention that the region behind Sofala was known to the Arabs as Saba, which is the same as Sheba the historical name of what is now the Yemen. One of the principal rivers here is the Sabi or Sabia.<sup>32</sup>

It is not necessary to accept such traditions literally, but all archaeological work from the discoveries in the Troad to Knossos and the walls of Jericho, warn us that we discard the underlying basis at our peril. What these traditions must establish is that the region had long been in the hands of the Arabs, who knew of walled depots in the interior; that these constructions were so ancient that they conceived of their having gone back to the time of Solomon; and that as a consequence this was the land of Ophir.

Therefore, we have to see the Indian Ocean as being constantly sailed by Greek, Roman, Arab, Indian and other vessels, bound by the wind and current systems. Since lands beyond India were reached, then we must conclude on these grounds alone that all these countries traded also with East Africa. Even if the principal monopoly in the middle of the Christian era, until the coming of the Portuguese, lay in the hands of the Arabs, (with some contribution from India), this must have been the case.

The earliest European contacts with southern and central Africa were made by the Portuguese. Of these the first to arrive was the great explorer Vasco da Gama.

In 1487 the Portuguese Captain Bartolomeu Dias de Novaes reached the African coast north of Walvis Bay, at Port Alexander, in Angola. He proceeded down the west coast to round the Cape and sail as far northward as the river he named Rio do Infante (Bushman's River). All the natives he met he calls "Negroes" and describes them as having frizzy hair. As he also describes them as cowherds, there seems little doubt that he was describing Hottentots who have frizzy hair. The Negro more properly has woolly hair. As they are a dark tawny in comparison with his white sailors they could quite well be called "black" although in comparison with the Negroid stock they are yellow.

Although Dias arrived on the western coast of southern Africa fairly far north, certainly further north than might have been expected, it is likely that he only did this by having made a course much to the west in the first instance. For, just as on the east coast of Africa movement by sea is restricted according to the seasonal wind systems and the currents, so is it also on the west coast. Thus when Vasco da Gama sailed southwards from the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of west Africa his route swung well out

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

from the continent of Africa, in one long sweep to the west. This was done to take the prevailing winds on his port beam and to avoid beating into the wind when no progress would have been made. Only when he had reached about 30 degrees south, roughly on the latitude of Cape Province, was it possible for him to turn to port and sail on an easterly course. The consequence of this is that the whole of the west coast from the Gulf of Guinea southwards to the Cape was entirely unexplored by Vasco da Gama.

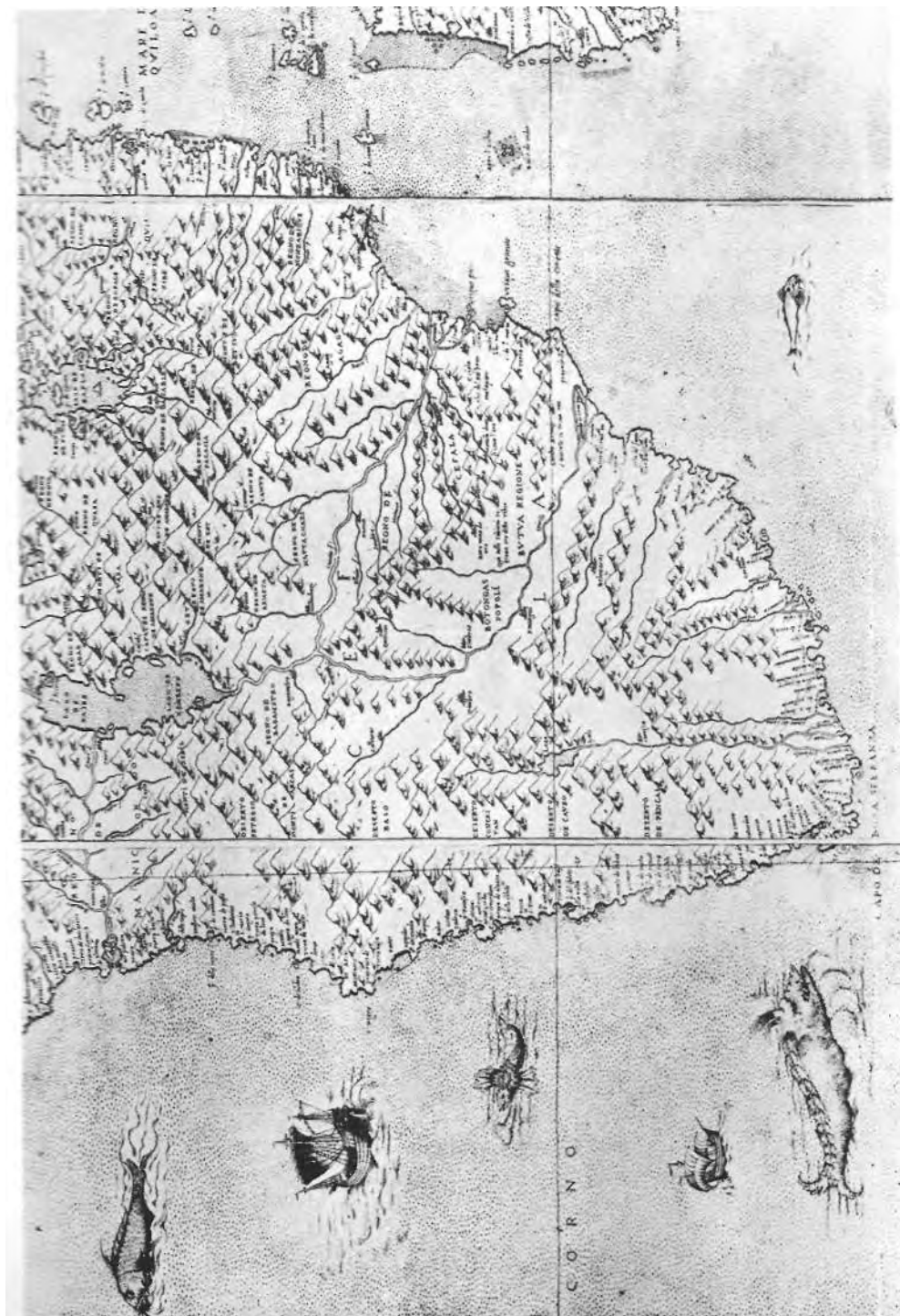
His first landfall was at St. Helena Bay on the west coast just to the north of the Cape itself. Here the natives were seen, and the Portuguese noted that their colour was lighter than that of the Negroes they knew in Guinea, while their hair was frizzy. These people had bone or horn-tipped spears and "darts". It is quite obvious that these were Hottentots.

When Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope, he eventually made the land at Mossel Bay where he met native herdsmen who had draught animals with yokes on their necks, and also sheep. This too suggests that they were Hottentots.

At Epiphany he came to the "Copper" River, the Inharrime, near Delagoa Bay, where the natives traded with him with their copper. These were probably people like the Lemba, who work in metal. Continuing northwards, on the Mozambique coast he passed Sofala without seeing it, whence, as the Portuguese learned later, "the Moors (Arabs) obtained (gold) by trafficking with the Negroes there". This is solely a hearsay account and does not necessarily mean that the Arabs obtained their gold from the Negroes. For the Portuguese the term Negro appears to refer to *natives* as a whole. This means in fact that what they said is that they heard of the Arabs of Sofala obtaining their gold by trade with native peoples (or the residents) in the interior. This is a reasonable interpretation since we have seen that the Portuguese used black or Negro as a general term for people who were darker than themselves and natives in these parts.

We wish to make it clear that we are not contesting the fact that the natives of Mozambique by this time had ceased to be *Wak-Wak* (Cappoid Bushfolk and Hottentots) and were in fact *Zang* or *Zenj* (Negroes or Arab-Negro crosses). For we are informed by Yakut (1220 A.D.) in his big geographical account that Sofala had by his time already come to be the furthest city (of the Arabs obviously) in the country of the Zang.<sup>33</sup> Nor are we saying that at this late period when the Portuguese sailed up the coast, when in our view the Zimbabwean civilisation had already been destroyed, Bantu were not trading gold with the coastal Arabs. They were still doing that in the nineteenth century by washing gold from streams, filling the grains into quills and selling these to merchants of the coast. A great mining complex could not easily be extinguished. Especially would this be the case once it had created a trade in its metal, with merchants ready to receive it. Some of the native population, who had come to acquire some of the simpler knowledge of its recovery, must inevitably have exploited the opportunities presented to them. But such a gold trade was a mere shadow, as we shall





Map of Southern Africa, dated 1564 by Giacomo Gastaldi, showing Zimbabwe in its correct latitude and in relation to Sofala on the coast.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

show later, of what it had been before the Bantu occupied Mozambique and Rhodesia.

This explanation we believe reconciles the loose use by the Portuguese of the term black or Negro, the existence of the Bantu in Mozambique, the known fact that they were not to be seen at the Cape, and such exploitation of gold recovery in which they were engaged at this time. The modern Portuguese writer Costa Brochado<sup>34</sup> in fact interprets what these ancient writers meant to infer when he says: "Sofala, a famous port on the Indian Ocean where the Moors used to go in search of the gold mined in the interior".

Returning to the early Portuguese explorations we find that the explorers eventually entered the mouth of the Zambezi. Here they observed that most of the native people were mulattoes of whom some knew some Arabic. These natives of the country wore cotton and silk. From this it is clear that this coastline was inhabited by people who had been influenced by Arabic dress and cultural influences, and were partly crossbred with the Arabs who dominated the coast from such towns as Sofala northwards. This situation is the key to such a language as Swahili which arose to the north—a Bantu language heavily impregnated with Arabic. These people were indistinguishable from the Zenj of the Zanzibar coast.

Further along the coast, off the town of Mozambique, Arabs came aboard the Portuguese fleet and it was noted that they were dressed exactly as the Moors of northern Africa with whom the Portuguese were familiar. Vasco da Gama was informed that they were vassals of the King of Kilwa, whose capital was to be found further north on the coast opposite Zanzibar. He was also informed by these "Moors" that the Kingdom of Kilwa, of which they were a part, drove a flourishing trade in gold and merchandise with India and the Arabian countries. Most of the gold, however, came out through Sofala which they had passed to their south.

From this it is clear that a great trade flourished down the coast of eastern Africa and across to India. Indeed, so close was the trade with India that the Arabs had pilots for the voyage to India stationed there. Later when Vasco da Gama reached India he found whole settlements of "Moors" in control of the overseas trade of India, who were in full contact with the towns of the east coast of Africa. It is clear from these statements alone that, unlike the west coast of Africa from the Gulf of Guinea to the Cape and round it northwards to Natal, the coast of East Africa to as far south as Sofala was settled by highly-civilised communities in touch by sea with the outer world of the Indian Ocean. On the west coast there was no possibility of regular cultural penetration of Africa. This accounts for the fact that from the Niger to the Congo these regions, and particularly the latter, were barbarous when first opened up by the Europeans. It was quite different on the east coast of the continent.

Furthermore, it might be mentioned that it was here on the coast of East Africa that Vasco da Gama found that three of the attendants of the emissaries of the Sheik of Mozambique were Abyssinian slaves who were still, secretly, Christians.









Above: A water colour of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe, painted by J. Theodore Bent, 1891

Below: Photo of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe, as it appears today.











At Malindi, sailors from some Indian vessels in port came on board the flagship of Vasco da Gama and prostrated themselves before the image of the Virgin Mary. They were heard to name, as the Portuguese thought, Christ. Obviously this was Krishna. From this there is no doubt that they were not Moslems or "Moors" from India but Hindus. This is important because it indicates that the Indian traders involved came from southern India; consequently this supports the view of a direct crossing of the Indian Ocean to South India using the monsoon and the trade winds.

Thus far we have discussed mainly Arabic and Hindu contacts with the coastlands of East Africa before the coming of the Portuguese. There were, however, others of significance. In addition there were Indian connections with East Africa which are not revealed thus far, and into which we will go later in some greater detail.

In the sixth century A.D. we learn from the Alexandrian merchant Cosmas Indicopleustes\* that the Ethiopian King of Axum or Auxum regularly sent expeditions to the south. These seaborne trading parties took six months to go and return. They bartered oxen, salt, and iron for gold. That these gold-yielding regions were in the southern hemisphere is certain, not only by the time taken on the voyages, but by the fact that Cosmas Indicopleustes records that the winter there is at the time of summer in the north. He also tells us that Zingium (the land of the Negroes) lay beyond, that is, further south than the country where the incense grew, which was called Barbaria. Furthermore, we learn that, at that time, beyond Barbaria there was the Zingion Ocean (the Sea of the Zinj, Zenj, Zing or Zang or Negroes) and bordering upon this was the country known as Sasos where there were great gold mines.<sup>35</sup>

According to the tenth century A.D. Arabic recorder Masudi, Sofala, from which much gold was obtained, was inhabited by a tribe of Abyssinians who had recently emigrated there, whose king was the Waklimi, and whose capital was nearby.<sup>36</sup> This suggests that although the ruling classes were Abyssinian, the native population in the tenth century was Wak-Wak, or Bushman-Hottentot. Such a view, as we shall see later, is consistent with the archaeological evidence, particularly from Mapungubwe, on the Limpopo, where the native population was Hottentot and not Negroid.

The Persians had an early contact with East Africa. King Narseh (293 B.C.) had relations with a ruler of Zhand (Zinj). Persian coins of the Parthian Dynasty, before the Christian era, and early Sassanian of the third and fourth centuries A.D., have been found in Zanzibar.

The Sassanian Persians under Chosroes II expelled the Ethiopians from Yemen in 579 A.D. and for a time dominated the Indian Ocean as a consequence. They were still well established in Zanzibar at the end of the sixth century. It seems inconceivable, in view of the fact that it was known that south of the Land of Zing there lay the land known as Sasos, whence came the gold, that they were not also involved in its exploitation.

\*Cosmas Indicopleustes: this name indicates an Indian association. He was a merchant who sailed the Indian Ocean and knew Abyssinia. He became a Christian monk about 547 A.D., and wrote the *Topographia Christiana*.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Kilwa was settled by Shirazi Persians in 975 A.D. which indicates a continuous movement, one after the other, of northern peoples down the coast of East Africa, making permanent settlements at the various ports and *entrepots* of trade.

W. H. Ingram<sup>37</sup> tells us that Indians (Hindus) were settling on the coast of East Africa from the seventh century B.C. onwards, and even went so far inland that they reached the Great Lakes. Apparently Sokotra, at the entrance to the Red Sea, was an Indian staging port as it has an Indian name. As Professor Dart points out,<sup>38</sup> if Miss M. A. Murray\* is right, the impact of India upon Ethiopia goes back to as early as the fourth millennium B.C. Also, Dr. M. A. Murray points to many links between Egypt and India<sup>39</sup> which pre-supposes contacts between East Africa and India as well.<sup>x</sup>

Idrisi tells us that the people of Sayouna (probably the Portuguese Sena) actually came from India, the country of the Zindj, and others.<sup>40</sup>

Jordanus (*circa* 1330)<sup>41</sup> tells us that East Africa south of Ethiopia was called in his time *India Tertia*. We also learn that at this period there was an Indian state between Lake Victoria and the coast. Later it was broken up and its inhabitants were scattered to as far as Lake Nyasa and the Limpopo on the borders of South Africa.<sup>42</sup>

There appears to be a consensus of opinion that Hindus reached the Great Lakes. The Rev. H. v. Sicard draws attention to the linguistic investigations of Homburger<sup>43</sup> who reminds us that the Sanskrit name of India is *Bharate*, and the Indonesian is *Bharat*. (Indeed, this is also the modern Indian name for that country.) He draws attention to the traditions of the Ndoroba and Naudi. These are Nilo-Hamitic tribes occupying Kenya and Uganda who are more Hamitic than Negroid as Professor Seligman has pointed out.<sup>44</sup> They speak Nilotic languages with Hamitic elements. According to accounts given by the Ndoroba and Naudi, who settled in their lands between the headwaters of the Vaso Nyiro and Lake Victoria, the Masai (another Nilo-Hamitic people) drove out a long-haired stock who lived in stone kraals and who were pastoralists like themselves. Having long hair makes it clear that they were Caucasoids. It is unlikely that the upstanding crest of hair of the Hamites would be so described since the Nilo-Hamites would be familiar with that type of long hair. These two tribes call these people Eborata.<sup>45</sup> They dwelt in the district where the Hyrax Hill excavations have taken place and the terraces of the Vasin Gishu Plateau<sup>46</sup> are found.

It seems that here we have the survival of elements of original Indian settlers on the coast who, crossing with the indigenous peoples as they spread towards the Lakes, have left the evidences of their ancestry in what

\*According to Dr. Margaret A. Murray, gold probably came to Egypt from India (*The Splendour that was Egypt*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1949, p.98). Since India appears to have been an entrepot, and since the sailing routes would place India as a port of call from Southern Africa, this gold was probably from Rhodesia.

<sup>x</sup>Professor V. G. Childe points in a number of places in his work to parallels between artefacts found in India and in Egypt. (*New Light on the Most Ancient East*. London: Kegan Paul, 1934, p.218).

became Nilo-Hamitic or similar peoples, and who have now been absorbed into later Bantu or Bantu-ised peoples.

These two Nilo-Hamitic tribes migrated into their present locations in the sixteenth century and it was in the same century that the patriarchal Galla, who are Eastern Hamites, were driven from the shores of a great central African lake called Borgame. They have, besides Cushitic blood, some Caucasoid genes as is perceived by the fact that many of them have brown, as opposed to Negroid, black, skins as well as long hair. The interesting point is that their ancestor was one Baraytuma. Here we get again the occurrence of a word which looks as though it were derived from Bharat. In which case the Caucasoid elements, reflected in skin colour and hair length, would be derived from Indian origins.

The Rev. H. v. Sicard<sup>47</sup> reminds us that Idrisi tells us that there was a big town called Tarma which lay on the shores of a great lake south of the Equator from which flowed one branch of the Nile. This is clearly a reference to Lake Victoria. Here rice was grown. It is significant that in the *Puranas* (Indian sacred literature which was admitted to the "canon" between the sixth and eighth centuries A.D.) there is the mention of Sharma which is described as a mountainous land whence arises a holy river.<sup>48</sup> This would seem to be an obvious reference to the Nile. As H. v. Sicard points out, this knowledge of the source of the Nile could not have been arrived at by reaching Lake Victoria from the coast. Here he sees the meeting point of iron-working traditions from the north (Egypt, Nubia, and the Sudan) and from the east. Since the *Puranas* were finally revised *circa* 500-800 A.D., it means that this Indian or Indianised town was in existence before and down to that time. Since the towns of the Kenya coast (such as Malindi, presumably Gedi, and Mombasa) were exporting iron according to Idrisi (1154 A.D.),<sup>49</sup> it is clear that non-African influences were entering central Africa at this time, and that from these sources came the link at Lake Victoria which connected with interests arriving from the north along the Nile.

A map by Fra Mauro (1459) which was published in 1492/3 shows an inscription which indicates that an Indian ship had doubled the Cape of Good Hope into the Atlantic in 1420.

Besides Indian exploration, exploitation, and settlement of East Africa, there is conclusive evidence of Indonesian also. According to Professor Dart, the first of the Indonesian settlement was Caucasoid, had domestic cattle, and used wooden spears, slings and clubs. It is represented today by the Hova of Madagascar.<sup>50</sup>

The second Indonesian invasion into Madagascar and East Africa brought with it peoples who had knowledge of terrace irrigation for rice cultivation, weaving, warp-dyeing, and possibly pottery-making, which is thought to have occurred at the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>51</sup> This culture may well have been that which introduced the outrigger canoe, as a sea-going vessel. This stock was probably Indonesian Malay, that is, of Caucasoid-Mongoloid ethnic types.

Idrisi, the Arab writer (1154 A.D.), tells us that the people of al-Zabadj

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

(Indonesia) visited the people of Sofala for the iron ore which was mined in the mountains of Sofala and which was better than the Indian iron.<sup>52</sup>

In dealing with the navigation in the Indian Ocean and beyond, it should be understood that voyaging and knowledge of navigation in these regions was much more extensive than the Europeans, with their limited horizons throughout the Middle Ages, have appreciated. Not only were Arabs and Indians plying these oceans to the coasts of Africa, but in the easterly direction there were actual ports in such countries as Sumatra when the Portuguese first arrived in these waters in the early part of the sixteenth century. What is more, the Sumatrans knew of a country to their south which the Portuguese later called *Ilhas do ouro*, the gold islands. In 1521 Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, the Portuguese Governor of India ordered Cristovao de Mendonça to discover these islands. There is some reason to believe he did discover them—a rim of islands and reef "which is in fact Australia's greatest gold-producing region".<sup>53</sup> Gomes de Sequeira in 1525 may have reached York Peninsula, Australia.<sup>54</sup> Even before this date, in 1513, the Portuguese had reached Chinese ports, and Japan was reached in the same century. But even so, the Portuguese were only sailing on seas and courses already established by many nations.

The point of all this is that the first Europeans in the Indian and Pacific Oceans were not sailing on unknown seas. These waters were merely new and strange to *them*. They had been known for centuries or longer to peoples of Asia, and it was from their knowledge that the first Europeans voyaging in these oceans were given the information which led them to even more distant lands.

Even when the Portuguese planned their expeditions to discover the Cape of Good Hope route to India they were well aware of the lands they expected to find from their agents in Cairo, Ethiopia, and Arabia. This is a reason why only one of the four vessels used was a caravel. The other three were much larger. These much less handy vessels were designed with only a lateen sail on the mizzen mast, simply because these ships had to carry sufficient artillery to silence Arab ports and fortresses.

Therefore, just because our limited horizons made *terra incognita* everything outside European waters, for us to conclude that the east coast of Africa was unknown land, only occasionally at the best visited by a few odd vessels, is a complete misconception. The waters of the east coast of Africa were constantly being sailed by Arab, Indian, Indonesian, Chinese, and other traders who were exploiting the resources of the continent through their ancient colonies and trading depots spread out all along the coast to as far south as Sofala in Mozambique.

Any theory concerning the civilisations of the hinterland of East Africa which fails to take cognizance of, and give full weight to, these facts, is so unrealistic that it should not be considered to have any value commanding consideration by serious and objective scholars.

It is also of interest to note that da Gama left his sick among Christians at Malindi, on the Kenya coast, before he preceded to India. This suggests

that there must have been an Ethiopian community settled there. It is unlikely that the Christians were of any other nationality. It is thus evident that not only were Europeans reaching East Africa by the fifteenth century but that they had been preceded by Arabs, Ethiopians, Persians, Indians and Indonesians, who were already there either as distinct communities or as part of the racial matrix, at the time of the European arrival. We can show also something of the Chinese contact with east and probably south Africa.

There is evidence of trade between Sofala in Mozambique, and China, attested by several ancient writers, as the Rev. H. v. Sicard has pointed out.<sup>55</sup> It took place by way of the port of Somanat, in Kathiawar, as was reported by al-Biruni (962-1048).<sup>56</sup>

The Rev. H. v. Sicard<sup>57</sup> has also drawn attention to Idrisi's statement (1154)<sup>58</sup> that in the mountains of Sofala there was much iron ore, and the inhabitants of al-Zabadj (Indonesia) visited the inhabitants of Sofala and took thence the iron to India and its islands. Idrisi also says that the people of Sayouna (Sena in Sofala) came from India, the country of Zindj (Zinj, Zeng, or Zang), and other countries.

From this it is clear that there were contacts between the east coast of Africa, at Mozambique and far inland to the borders of Rhodesia, and China, Indonesia, and India in and around the twelfth century A.D.

It is not our purpose here at this moment to establish the prehistory and history of Zimbabwe, in its various sequences. Here we only set out to establish the fact that, from the earliest times, the coast of East Africa was known to all the civilised peoples of the Indian Ocean and beyond. As a consequence of this fact, it was quite impossible, since all these people were engaged in gold-trading and exploitation, that they should not be intimately associated with Mozambique and its Rhodesian hinterland.

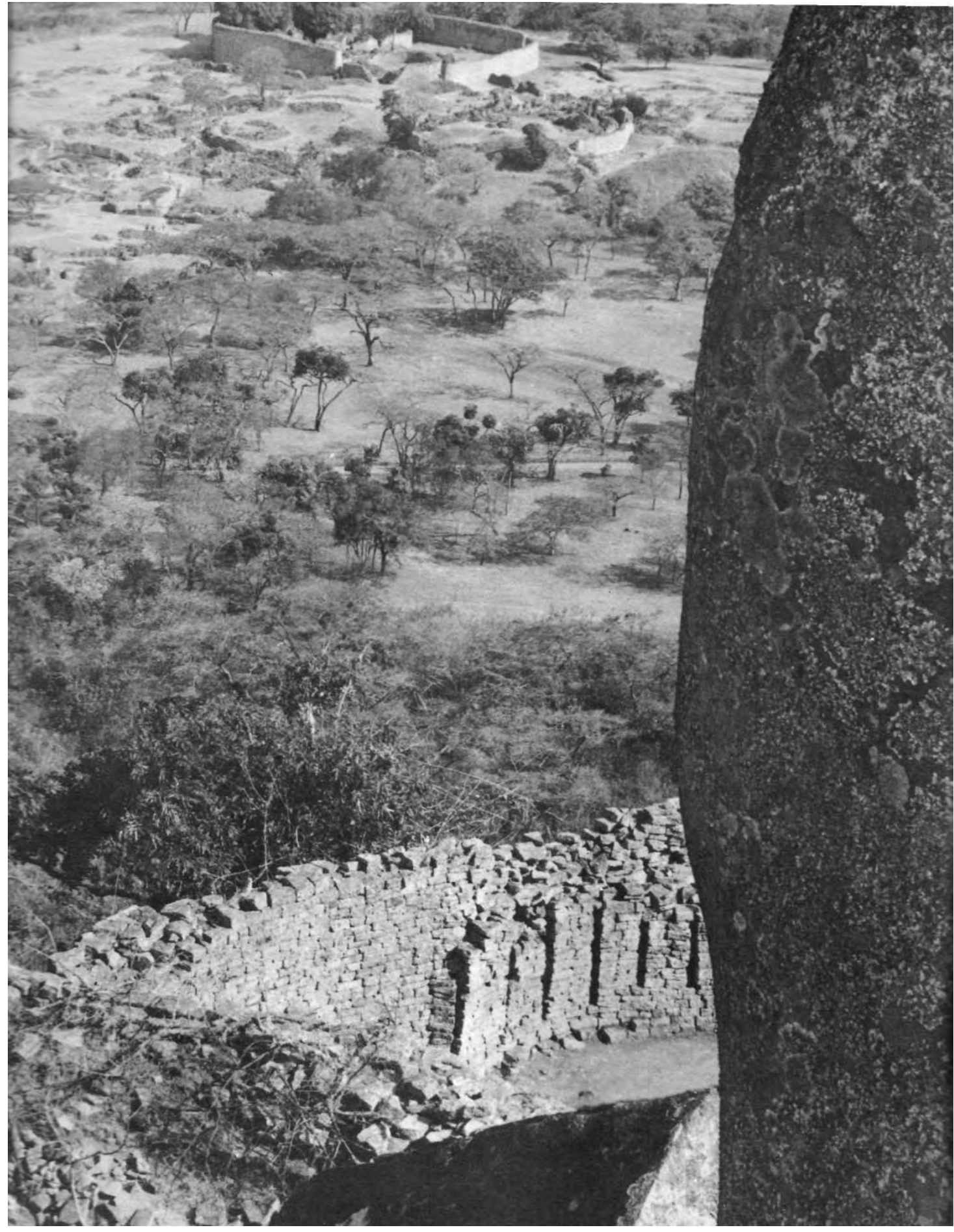
Since for most of this period these regions were not part of the land of the Zinj (Arabised Negroes) nor of the more Negroid Bantu, it follows therefore, on *a priori* grounds, that the onus of proving a Bantu origin for the exploitation of gold from these "Sasos" lands (which we assume were Mozambique and Rhodesia) lies with those who advocate such a theory. On the basis of the facts we have so far covered, such an hypothesis would appear to be highly improbable. That being so, then the evidence for the Bantu as the architects and builders of the Zimbabwean complex is non-existent.

We would add that the tendency to incredulity among Europeans who refuse to accept the early dominating overseas influences in East Africa (which the foregoing evidence completely and irrefutably demonstrates) is because we cannot accustom ourselves to the fact that all the rest of the world was not in the state of benighted ignorance of world geography as was Europe at the beginning of the Age of Discovery.

# THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

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## CHAPTER

# 3

### Mineral Resources and Plant Distribution in Relation to Settlement in Eastern Africa

SETTLEMENT usually occurs only when there is something to attract settlers. This East African coastland, on the whole, was not one which would readily invite settlers who wished to farm the lands along its shores. Even in the height of colonial expansion overseas from Europe there was no such movement on any considerable scale, unlike what has occurred, for instance, in South Africa. Consequently these countries bordering the east coast would only be settled by a gradual spread of peoples through increasing population from the interior of Africa, or by people coming from outside to exploit particular assets. Other than a certain amount of hardwood found on the Kenya coast, and again on the borders of Tanganyika and Mozambique in some of the tropical forest areas which reach the sea, there is little to attract the venturesome except for the metals which are to be found further inland from Zambia southwards into Rhodesia and thence into South Africa. Here copper, iron, tin, zinc, gold and silver, all metals of great interest to man from the time when he began first to develop his technical processes, are to be found. Of all these, gold has always been the greatest magnet to draw the more advanced men to other lands.

As far as the ancient world is concerned, gold was obtained from south-eastern Europe and from the British Isles; some came from the lands of the northern shores of the Mediterranean, and Arabia and Ethiopia. Beyond Ethiopia lay the lands of southern Africa which are rich in gold, of which Rhodesia is the most northerly. The British Isles are as far away from Palestine or Egypt as is Rhodesia. Consequently, on the count of distance alone, Rhodesia need not be ruled out from consideration when we come to decide whence came the vast quantities of gold which archaeological research shows us existed in the old countries of Europe, the Near East, and North Africa. The quantity of gold extracted from Rhodesia was enormous by any estimation. B. G. Paver<sup>1</sup> puts at 650 tons or 21 million ounces the amount extracted by the ancients. When this is taken into consideration with what we have said earlier about the Land of Ophir, its rich yields, and its distance from the Mediterranean, we have a completely congruent set of facts. If this gold of Rhodesia, extracted on such a scale, did not go to the

Opposite: A view of masonry of the Acropolis overlooking Zimbabwe in the background.





A stele on the wall of the Acropolis, Zimbabwe.

civilisations of the ancient world, we would be entitled to ask where it did go. There is no evidence that it was used by the Bantu. Indeed, the Bantu have always shown themselves indifferent to gold. For this reason, in Rhodesia a chief of the Matabele, the Regent Um Nombata told Baines<sup>2</sup> that he could have all the gold he could find.

It is of significance that the gold centres of Rhodesia are associated with copper, tin, micaceous iron and ochre deposits. Dr. Percy A. Wagner has shown that bronze was made intentionally on the farm of Blaaubank, Rooiberg District, in the Transvaal, in numerous furnace sites which have been found there. From this it is clear that we have here a high degree of metallurgy previous to the southern African Iron Age. Since the latter preceded the arrival of the Bantu, this means there was an advanced Bronze Age metallurgy in this region well before the Bantu arrived. The accounts of Arab commerce, which we cite in this book, all stress the trade in iron. These would seem to infer that long before the Sabaean interest in the trade with Rhodesia, and their settlement there (which we hope to show was the origin of the erection of the megalithic cities of Rhodesia in the first millennium A.D.), an advanced technology was being practised by people well above the primitive level at which we should imagine the Bushmen and Hottentots were then.

In some of the bronze of southern Africa there is found nickel. This impurity occurs with regularity in the bronze found in ancient Egypt and Sumatra. Since nickel occurs only rarely in the copper mines of the Near East, it suggests that Rhodesia and the Transvaal may well have been the source of the metal used in these early artefacts of the ancient world.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, in addition to the vast amount of gold which has been extracted, we have evidence of a very early extraction of copper, and the manufacture of bronze, long before the arrival of the Bantu anywhere in east Africa, let alone the south. We have also the presumption that this copper supplied the ancient world of Egypt and Mesopotamia, at a period which would be before the famous expeditions of Hiram King of Tyre and King Solomon, and even longer before Necho II sent his Phoenicians to circumnavigate Africa. It looks therefore as though Necho II was well aware of Rhodesia and Mozambique as a source of important metals. It is not necessary to postulate at this early period, metropolitan and urban centres for the extraction of gold. But it is certain that there were surface-working mining settlements and prospecting parties, with gold-washing places on the rivers, interspersed among the nomadic Bushmen and Hottentots at a very early date.

Mr. Roger Summers has made the point that there is no evidence that gold from this coast was yet an article of trade 1900 years ago.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the fact that negative evidence of this character should not carry any weight against the positive evidence which would show foreign, non-Bantu and non-African, associations with the trade of this region, there are other and very important considerations which are overlooked. It is not easy to sail up the coast from Sofala to Zanzibar, Kilwa, Lamu, Malindi, and to other Arab ports of Azania, the northern Zeng coast, which were engaged in a two-way trade with Arabia and Persia using the north-east monsoon to go south and the south-west monsoon to go north. From Sofala the easiest and safest route, so far as sea passages are concerned, was to India and thence to Arabia.

Since India was one of the great buyers of gold, there can be little doubt that the main gold market was in India. Gold would, therefore, come from Rhodesia and Mozambique to Saba in south-west Arabia, via India, where probably Ophir proper lay, through which *entrepot* this gold came.

Furthermore, merchants leaving the Red Sea or Persian Gulf ports would normally take three years over the voyage. This was dictated by the leisurely character of barter trading, the need to grow crops, and above all by those sailing conditions to which we have drawn attention.

We should not, therefore, expect any frequent reference to southern African gold or copper in the trade of the Arab settlements of the Tanganyikan, Kenyan, and Somaliland coasts, as the mineral could normally only be shipped in from India. India could in fact be generally regarded as the source of what in fact was Rhodesian gold.

That being so, King Hiram and King Solomon could very well have been bringing into their Red Sea ports alluvial mined gold from the primitive

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

settlements which may even as early as that time have been searching for the metal. But such gold would arrive with products which came from the Orient.

Exploration for minerals and their exploitation would not take place without the creation of settlements and the introduction of exotic plants. Therefore it is of interest to observe that among the flora of East Africa there are certain plants which are not indigenous. Their locations are also of significance. For example, the coconut palm is found in Zanzibar, at Mombasa, and the neighbouring parts of the coast. The distribution of this fruit was originally in the Pacific, on the coasts of the East Indies, and from thence spread outwards. It was cultivated early in Ceylon and on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts of India. In Ceylon the wealth of an individual was reckoned by the number of palms he possessed in much the same way that the Bantu reckon wealth by head of cattle. It is clearly an imported palm at some stage in history or prehistory, and its location around areas of later Arab settlement is not without significance. We are not, however, suggesting that it is an Arab importation.

Cotton is divided into eastern and western species. The former was early developed in India and perhaps nearly as early in China. Nevertheless, it seems that India was the great centre of development of this textile plant. Its spread became general throughout tropical countries. It is of interest to note that in Africa it is in such places as Malindi on the Kenya coast (which is a town founded by Arabs at an early date) that it is grown. R. N. Hall tells us he found wild cotton growing in the neighbourhood of Zimbabwe. Cotton was a superfluous crop for the Bantu who wore skins and did not weave.

Bent<sup>5</sup> tells us that in his day the Bantu, who had been using bark cloth only elsewhere, were producing from a species of cotton a fair equivalent of the genuine article, which they spun on spindles, and made into long strings. In view of the discovery of spindle whorls in the Zimbabwe ruins, and having regard to the fact that the Negroid peoples wore skins and bark cloth normally, it is clear that we have here an inheritance of a simple craft from the former civilisation of Zimbabwe. It is a woman's craft, and with the capture of the womenfolk on each successive stage of decline and collapse of the Zimbabwean civilisation and its successor peoples, the art of spinning passed into the crafts of the local Shona tribes.

Bent<sup>6</sup> tells us that in the Mazoe Valley he and his party came upon lemons growing wild which they ate. That such fruit was indigenous is difficult to believe, as we do not find it widespread in southern Africa when the Europeans arrived.

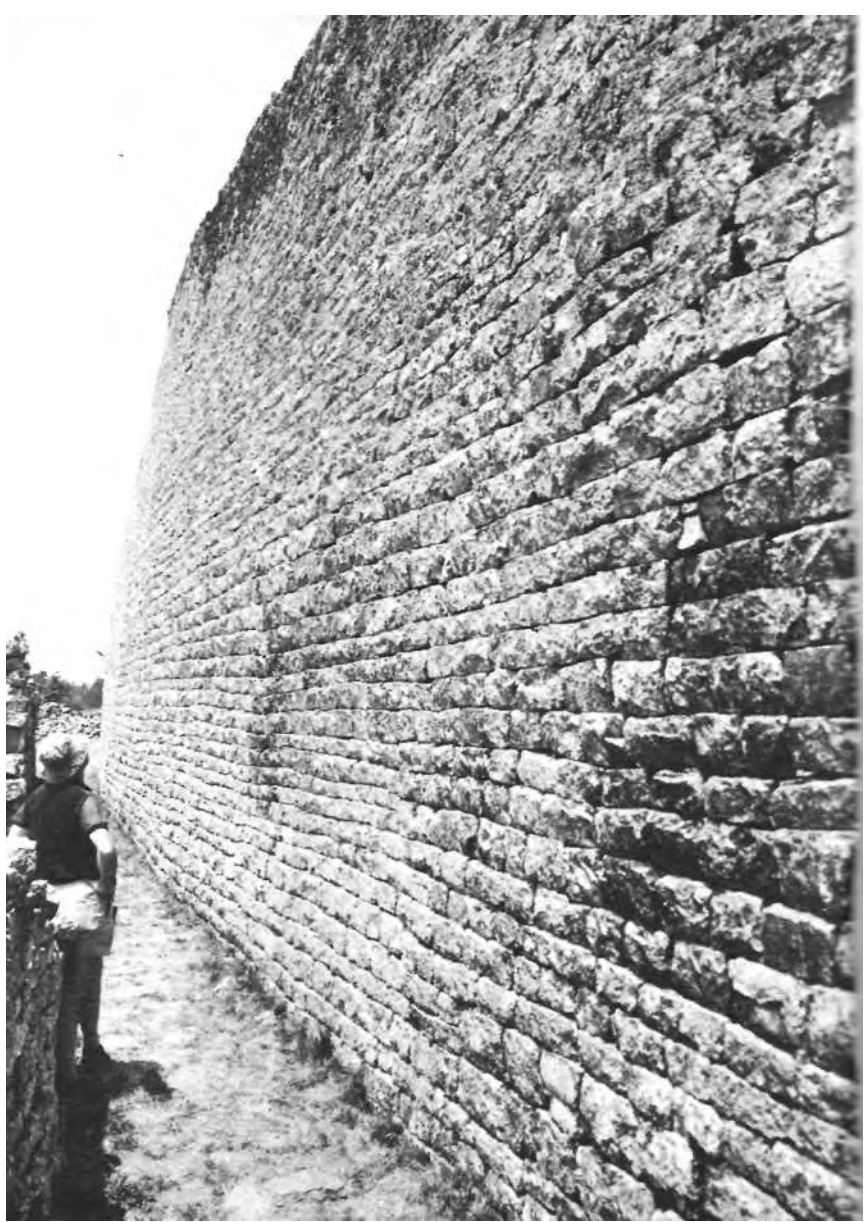
We find that the early English-speaking explorers refer to the growing of rice in the Shona country of Rhodesia. Obviously such a plant came from the eastern coasts of the Indian Ocean.\*

\*Professor Murdock has pointed out that rice came to East Africa from Saba. (*Africa: its peoples and their culture history*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.207).



The Parallel Passages in the Elliptical Temple at Zimbabwe.

A view of the massive wall structure as now seen at Zimbabwe.



Although the date palm spread from the Near East throughout the whole of northern Africa at a very early date, the fig tree, the home of which was Asia Minor, remained much more restricted to the Mediterranean. From a passage of Herodotus it would seem that it was not known to the Persians in the time of Cyrus the First.<sup>7</sup> In view of this restricted distribution it is of considerable interest to find its occurrence in Rhodesia at the sites of pre-historic mining operations. Such a fruit must have been deliberately brought there, and the presumption is that it is associated with these early mines. Furthermore, the most likely centre from which it could have originated is in the eastern Mediterranean, and adjacent neighbouring countries to which it had spread.

The jasmine, a woody flowering creeper, has a centre of origin for one species, the common white jasmine (*jasminum officinale*) which is based in India, while the zambak or Arabian jasmine (*jasminum Sambac*) as its name infers, is of Arabian origin. It is found there and in Persia. It is a plant which is highly esteemed for its scent and the perfume made from it. It, or related varieties, are found in China, south-east Asia, and in the Mediterranean generally. There is a variety found in Ethiopia which is used for medicinal reasons.

This jasmine is clearly not a native of eastern Central Africa, yet it is found associated with prehistoric remains in Rhodesia. This makes it hard to believe that it is not an introduction by earlier people associated with such ruins. If this inference is correct (as seems inescapable) then it is clear that such people were not of African origin. If this reasoning is correct then we look to contacts with Arabia and Persia for its introduction.

The yam and banana appear to have been introduced into Africa by way of Madagascar and the Zambezi by Indonesians from the east about the beginning of the Christian era.\* The coming of these plants infers contact, and probably trade, as early as nearly as two millennia ago between the east coast of Central Africa, Madagascar, and Indonesia.

Professor G. P. Murdock,<sup>8</sup> a leading expert of the anthropology of Africa, attributes the arrival on the coast of Azania (Kenya and Tanganyika) of various exotic plants from the Pacific such as bananas, sugar cane, taro, and yams, to Indonesians from the Maanyan people of Borneo about 2 000 years ago. From thence such exotic food plants spread across Africa to the west coast by way of Uganda and Sudan. These plants caused a population explosion of the Negroes in the Niger-Cameroons region, which expanded north-eastwards into the Congo, from whence the Negroes invaded the north-east coast of Africa (in Azania) as the Bantu a few centuries after our era.

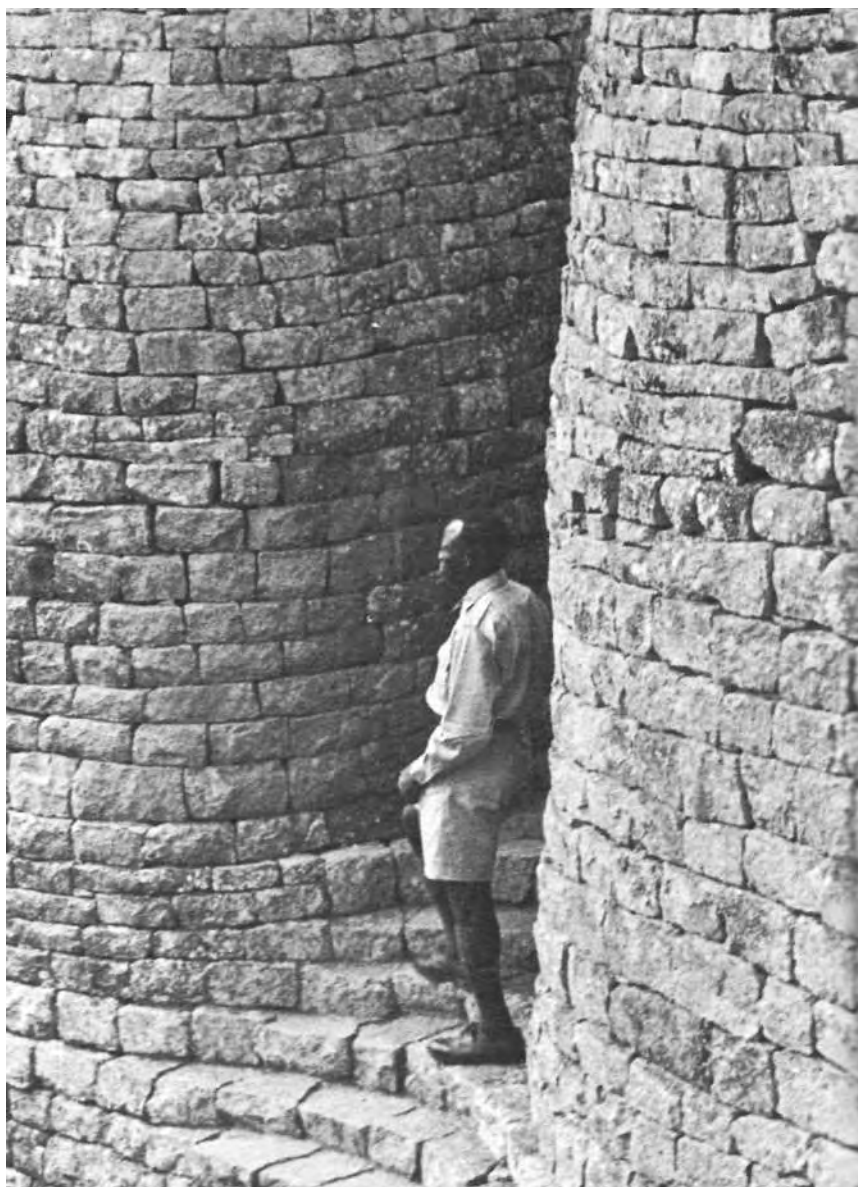
In principle we do not disagree with this view, but we add that as the Indonesians introduced these food plants in Azania so they did all the way down the coast to the mouth of the Zambezi, for throughout the whole of this coastland the Indonesian outrigger canoe is found.

Furthermore, it is our view that there were already scattered settlements of proto-Bantu throughout the Congo and along the rivers to the east coast subsisting on some agriculture, food collecting and hunting. Later, we have no doubt, these in the Congo were overrun by further incomers from the Niger-Cameroons region when the population explosion occurred. This, continuing in the Congo, caused them in due course to invade Azania as the Bantu, and this began the movement down the east African coast to produce the Bantu peoples we now know. However, that there were riverine Negroes along the valleys seems highly probable, first because of the natural drift down these valleys from the Congo, and secondly because in the vicinity

\*Professor C. D. Darlington gives 100 A.D. for the introduction of the yam and banana. (*The Evolution of Man and Society*. London: George Allen and Unwin. 1969, p.651, Map).



Walling and steps at  
Zimbabwe.



of the rivers to this day the Bantu tend to be blacker and more Negroid. This suggests a greater dose of Negroid genes among the riverine tribes than among the Bantu in general.

It should, however, be emphasised that two thousand years ago the population of east and southern Africa was Cappoid (Bushman and Hottentot) who undoubtedly dominated the land, even if there were some settlements of Negroes in the river valleys in which they, as hunting and cattle peoples respectively, were not interested. From these scattered riverine valley Negro settlements the new food plants would enter the Congo as the same new sources of sustenance were entering it by the way of Uganda, the Sudan, and the Cameroons and Niger.

It was this introduction from Indonesia of yam and banana, along with the breadfruit, coconuts, sugar cane, rice, and the taro, which led to their spread to the Niger-Camerouns, central Africa, and the Congo basin early in the Christian era. These events, according to Darlington,<sup>9</sup> coincided with the arrival of metal-workers in those parts of Africa from the north. The result was a population explosion of well-armed people, and the cause of those migrations of Negroids, who eventually, coming into East Africa and thence migrating southwards, created the Bantu peoples of later times. They were the people who, having settled in the land of the Cushitic Zing, on the coasts in Somalia, Kenya and Tanganyika, came to be known by the same name, and under it came to the notice of Arab and other civilised peoples.

There are only certain conclusions which can be drawn when we find a series of foreign plants of great value to man being introduced into a particular region of Africa, at a relatively late period of history. This is particularly so when it is not through a gradual spread from continent to continent overland from the earliest prehistoric times, but from the sea coasts inland. These conclusions are that the plants were brought by venturers and merchants, and, since the provenance of these plants is in Arabia, Persia, India, Ceylon, and particularly in Indonesia, we have a clear indication of the races and cultures involved in their importation.

Finally, we know that it is not in the nature of man to visit distant and dangerous places except for material gain. It therefore follows that, from a period which is to be dated between late B.C. until about the first and second centuries A.D. (when it is estimated that these new plants arrived), mariners brought the plants as part of their own food supplies. There was no question of their bringing them for the benefit of the indigenous Africans. These food plants were to sustain them at their places of landfall during the time they exploited the natural resources of distant and barbarous lands. Of these resources the greatest, and among minerals the most abundant, was gold. But in return for what they took away, the mariners inadvertently conferred on the Negroes a new means of sustenance which made it possible for them to increase their numbers many fold, and spread over large areas of the continent where they are intruders and not natives at all.

Therefore since these plants were introduced at this time it is hard to escape the conclusion that as early as the beginning of the Christian era, gold was being extracted and mined under the impetus of white, brown, and tawny-skinned venturers from Arabia, Abyssinia, Persia, India, and Indonesia, in that region of eastern Central Africa of which Rhodesia forms a hinterland.

1. **Paver, B. G.** *Zimbabwe Cavalcade*. Johannesburg: Central News Agency of South Africa, 1950, p.142.
2. **Baines, Thomas** *The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa*. London: **Stanford**, 1877, p.20.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

3. **Dart, R. A.** Phallic objects in Southern Africa. *South African Journal of Science* vol. 26, 1929, p.553.
4. **Summers, Roger** *Zimbabwe: A Rhodesian Mystery*. Johannesburg: Nelson, 1963, p.106.
5. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.72.
6. *Ibid*, p.291.
7. **Johnson, C. Pierrepoint** Fig. in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed. Edinburgh: Black, 1879, vol. 9, p.154.
8. **Murdock, G. P.** *Africa: its people and their culture history*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.222.
9. **Darlington, C. D.** *The Evolution of Man and Society*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1969, p.651, map.

## CHAPTER

# 4

Introduction  
to a few of  
the Exotic Elements  
of Culture relevant  
to the Zimbabwean  
Civilisation

PERHAPS ONE of the most striking intrusive objects along the coast of East Africa is the multihulled sailing boat. From the Kenya coast southwards as far as Mozambique, outrigger vessels are common. They are used everywhere by the fisher-folk today.

It is unlikely that this type of craft should develop in two such vastly different parts of the world as Indonesia and Polynesia on the one hand and the coast of East Africa on the other. When, moreover, we realise that the typical Negroids did not possess boats originally, we can see that it is more than unlikely that they should have been responsible for this advanced type of sailing craft. In fact it is a ludicrous proposition even to consider that they had any part at all in the creation of such a craft. It should be remembered that as late as the seventeenth century the Portuguese chronicler Father dos Santos informs us that the Karanga could not cross the Zambezi except by swimming, because they had no boats. On the west coast of Africa the Negro peoples have only dug-out canoes, and where they nowadays have sails, as on the coast of modern Ghana, these are obviously from European and Mediterranean maritime influence which has been beating on these shores for two and a half millennia. If any doubt should remain as to the Indonesian origin of the outriggers it should be set at rest by the fact that the languages of Madagascar are clearly Indonesian.

Since it is evident that the native multihull was brought to the east coast of Central Africa from across the Indian Ocean, we see in this one more proof of the arrival in ancient times, before the coming of the Portuguese, of peoples of a reasonable degree of civilisation.

The dhow is also to be found from the Red Sea to as far south as Mozambique. This indicates that southwards to the Straits of Madagascar, as well as in Madagascar itself (the coasts of which were occupied by Arab settlements in the same way that the coast of East Africa had Arab colonies in Kilwa, Malindi, Gedi, Tanga, and Sofala) these lands were under Arab and Persian influence.

Arabian glass beads, some of which might, indeed, belong to the western Mediterranean, have been found actually in Great Zimbabwe itself.<sup>1</sup> These

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

have characteristics similar to some found at Thebes in Greece, as they are black with white encircling lines. However, glass beads, and to some extent those of faience, are difficult to destroy and so it may be argued that they can pass across continents from hand to hand in the course of centuries. This is not the case when we come to pottery. Thus when a Trojan scyphus pot of the end of the second millennium B.C. is dragged up from the River Thames, no one doubts that it is other than a direct import brought by sea from the eastern Mediterranean and Anatolia. Such articles will not last whole, or even in recognisable pieces, if they are to pass frequently from hand to hand. Therefore the testimony of finds of Indian pottery and Chinese Ming ware down the coast of East Africa (as at Gedi on the Kenya coast) is conclusive of direct or nearly direct maritime contact. The same ware has been found in other parts of Africa, and in particular at Great Zimbabwe.

Since at Gedi the Chinese coin, the *cash*, has been found, it is clear that there is overwhelming evidence of trade between China and the whole of that part of Africa with which we are concerned. Whether the trade was direct or through the *entrepot* ports of India is not settled by such evidence. It should be borne in mind that southern India and Indonesia were for part of their history, such as in 1030 A.D., under the dominion of the Cholas. Consequently Indian and Indonesian influence was closely related, and these were not so distantly connected with the Chinese as might seem to be the case at first sight. Since, however, the Chinese knew of the Cape of Good Hope (as the Cape of Storms) it seems evident that the Chinese must have had a less remote association with Africa than would otherwise be supposed.

We would not press the next point if the Chinese association with Africa rested on this alone. Having established the fact, if only on the basis of Mr. Kirkman's excavations at Gedi, that such contacts actually existed, we can afford to point to the fact that the people of Lesotho or Basutoland are lighter-skinned, with a yellowish tinge, than is normal in the Negroid stock. While some of this colouring may be derived from the Cappoids (who are, in our opinion, an ancient branch of the Mongoloid type) it is likely that in part it is derived from later Mongoloid sources, such as Chinese or Indonesian who visited the east coast of Africa. Professor R. A. Dart draws attention to the Mongolian traits of the Cappoids.<sup>2</sup> As a result of these the Dutch settlers called them Chinese Hottentots. Whether these come mainly from a very ancient Mongoloid, as we tend to believe, or are largely due to a later Mongoloid (Chinese or Indonesian) infusion, is hard to say. However, their existence should not be overlooked.

It seems to us that we should not be surprised to find that East and Central Africa were within the range of frequent contact with the Far East, when we remember that fifty years after Marco Polo (who lived in the fourteenth century) the Genoese had flourishing trading stations in China, a Catholic archbishop resident in Peking and another at Tsi-nan-chu. As early as 1274 a Mongol bishop sat at the council of Lyons, and in the same year of 1274 a Nestorian monk, Rabban bar Sauma, born near Peking, visited Philip the Fair in Paris, and received communion from Nicholas IV



This photograph shows the overgrown state of Zimbabwe in 1890.

The Temple of Great Zimbabwe after initial clearing revealed the break in the wall caused by the fall of an ancient hardwood tree from within the derelict ruin, as described by Carl Mauch in 1870.





Overgrown ruins of Zimbabwe in the 1890s makes unreasonable the claim that it was occupied until 1835.

in Rome.<sup>3</sup> The Nestorians were, in fact, in China at least as early as 636 A.D., when Olopan, who came from Judaea, was favourably received.

The Arab contact, being much nearer, must have been quite intimate, while relations with the Mediterranean could hardly have escaped being established. It is only because we approach this matter from a European-centred point of view that we tend to favour any explanation except the right one for the megalithic civilisation of these central and southern African lands.

In considering extraneous artefacts in the Rhodesian civilisation associated with Zimbabwe we cannot avoid discussing those which bear upon clothing. This is the more important since manufactured cloth is not normal to the economy and social life of the Bantu and Negroid peoples, and wherever it is found it can be attributed to influences from outside West, Central, and Southern Africa.

At the time the White man came into contact with the Bantu they were all dressed in skins. Even the so-called "loin cloths" were made of leather. As far as one can see, there was no question of woven clothing in use at all. The only apparent exception is in the case of the Basuto people who today cover themselves, because of the cold upland environment in which they now live, in a woollen blanket or mophoso, or sometimes in a cotton one. However, it is unlikely that this is indigenous. If it should prove to be of native origin it will not materially affect our conclusion, as the Basuto are an exception to the general rule in several respects of dress. It is these people who wear the Basuto hat. They are remarkable for being the only southern African stock to weave hats, known as *katiba* or *thloro*, from straw.<sup>4</sup>

The only form of dress other than skin among the Bantu seems to have been the tiny fringe of dark brown string worn by Zulu maidens. Whether this string was worn earlier is not certain. However, spinning is not necessary to make string. If it had been, and if it had been in use for sufficiently long to allow inventive processes to develop, then a further use would have been found for the threads so produced, and the manufacture of woven cloth would have developed.

This brings us to the method used in the manufacture of cloth in all ancient civilisations. This was by spinning and weaving. The material evidence of the employment of such is found in the survival of round discs of stone (or spindle whorls). Spindle whorls are commonly found at Zimbabwe, which indicates that spinning occurred there. Yet all the Bantu peoples when first discovered wore skins, or used bark cloth—even the Venda, who are derived from the Zimbabwean complex. Furthermore, each Bantu nation had different and recognisable styles in their skin and leather clothing.

It seems difficult to attribute a knowledge of spinning and weaving to them at that stage of their history. Cotton was being spun and woven in Meroe,<sup>5</sup> the civilised centre of a people of Nubian Cushitic, Hamitic, and Semitic origin in the Sudan which was so strongly influenced by the ancient Egyptian civilisation. But we have no evidence of spinning and weaving among the Negroid peoples. It is true that Darlington says the Bantu crossing the Limpopo, perhaps in the seventh century A.D., could spin wool and cotton but had no loom.<sup>6</sup> As far as we know there is no evidence for this nor of such an early date for entry into South Africa. The discovery of spindle whorls in the sites of the Zimbabwean civilisation and the knowledge that all the Bantu wore skins and bark cloth, means we must ascribe spinning to the Zimbabweans—but that does not mean *ipso facto* to the Bantu in general.

If the Bantu had from ancient times had spindles to spin cotton, wool, or linen, then they would have worn clothing and not fur, leather, and bark cloth. They could not have failed to learn the art of weaving. The spindle has always been associated with the more advanced peoples who wore clothing woven from thread. The fact that we find spindle whorls at Zimbabwe, and that the Bantu did not wear textiles when first discovered,

This photograph was taken by the official photographer to the Pioneer Column in 1890, and shows the partially-cleared Conical Tower at Great Zimbabwe. It was more densely covered with vegetation when discovered by Carl Mauch in 1870.



would make it clear that we are dealing with an intrusive non-Bantu culture in these stone cities of Rhodesia.

This is supported by the fact, as we have already pointed out when discussing the occurrence of cotton at Zimbabwe, that while some spinning among Shona tribes associated with that place was observed, it was for the making of threads and string, and did not develop to the making of cloth. Even its existence in that context must be taken as having been derived from women captured from the original Zimbabweans, and brought into a localised group of Bantu who share some of the blood of the people who occupied Zimbabwe.



Among the artefacts of this Zimbabwean civilisation there are the frequent symbols of a bird, the so-called "Zimbabwe" bird. This has come to symbolise Rhodesia to the extent that it has become part of the coat-of-arms. It is certainly characteristic of the symbology of its civilisation. While we shall probably not know with any certainty what its real meaning may imply, it seems clear that it must be some cult symbol. Before the Christian and Islamic eras in northern Africa, we have an example of such a symbol in the sacred falcon. This has even been traced to West Africa. It is, therefore, not without significance that a similar symbol is discovered from time to time in other civilisations. Thus, for instance, there is the stone symbol of the Egyptian falcon which is found at Helwan, where it represents the God Horus.<sup>7</sup>

Professor G. P. Murdock<sup>8</sup> has drawn attention to the flat-bar zither which occurs in East Africa, but not in India, Arabia, or Egypt, while it does in Madagascar and Indonesia. When we turn to South Africa we find that the sanza or native piano is rarely met with in South Africa outside the metal-working Lemba and the Venda among whom they live<sup>9</sup> and is definitely derived from the Zimbabwean civilisation.<sup>10</sup>

Among the musical instruments found in Rhodesia is the Jews' harp which is not Bantu in origin.

Bent<sup>11</sup> pointed out that among the Shona peoples there were musical instruments and games which were Arabian. The game of *isafuba*, which is played with sixty holes in the ground, shows close relationship to pullangooly in India. In Singapore and on the west coast of Africa it is called *wary*, which indicates Arab influence.

Professor Murdock<sup>12</sup> draws attention to the fact that in East Africa there is a coconut grater of specifically Malayan and Polynesian form. Also there exists a special eel pot. There is, in addition, a peculiar method of catching turtles which is common to East Africa and Malaysia.

Besides the outrigger to which we have made a reference, the Indonesian origin of which is self-evident, there is another vessel called the *mtepe*. This boat is distinctly Malaysian. It consists of a vessel which has its planks lashed together with coconut fibres, with round eyes on the stem and stern.\* The author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* describes this "sewn" boat as well as hollowed out dug-out canoes. From this it is clear that the Indonesian influence was well-established on the coast of East Africa by the first century of our era.

The indications from the distributions of material culture, are that there are clear links between Madagascar and Indonesia by way of the East African coastal area of Azania. The period when this connection was established could not have been later than the first century A.D., as is evident from the description in the *Periplus* of the craft which at that time were to be

\*Lionel Casson tells us that Arab shipwrights used to fasten the planks of a hull by stitching them together with coconut fibres. This method was used up to the fifteenth century. (*The Ancient Mariners*. London: Gollanz, 1959, p. 156). Professor G. P. Murdock draws our attention to the fact that the author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* tells us that the people on the East Coast of Africa used "sewn" boats. (*Africa: its peoples and their culture history*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p. 209).



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

found on the coast of East Africa. Consequently, we can conclude that somewhere about the beginning of our era at the latest, Indonesians were already settled in Azania.

If there were any doubts left about this conclusion they are completely put at rest by an examination of the languages of Madagascar. These have been shown by O.C. Dahl<sup>13</sup> to have close relationship to the languages of Indonesia, and particularly to the speech of the Maanyan people of Borneo. This view is supported by I. Dyen.<sup>14</sup> Murdock<sup>15</sup> accepts this evidence which also shows that the languages of Madagascar separated from those of the Maanyan people about 3,900 year ago.

It is of considerable significance that the metal tools which the Bantu in Rhodesia have been found using are those which have been associated with the pre-European mining industry. Far from these tools proving that the Bantu were the mine-owners, sinkers, and engineers, of the Zimbabwean civilisation, the names of the tools disprove this completely as they all have parallels in alien languages, such as Persian. It is, therefore, certain that these tools were introduced by White peoples who taught the Bantu their names and use.

By the time the Europeans had arrived hemp, as a narcotic, was well established in Southern Africa and was derived from the Arabs.<sup>16</sup>

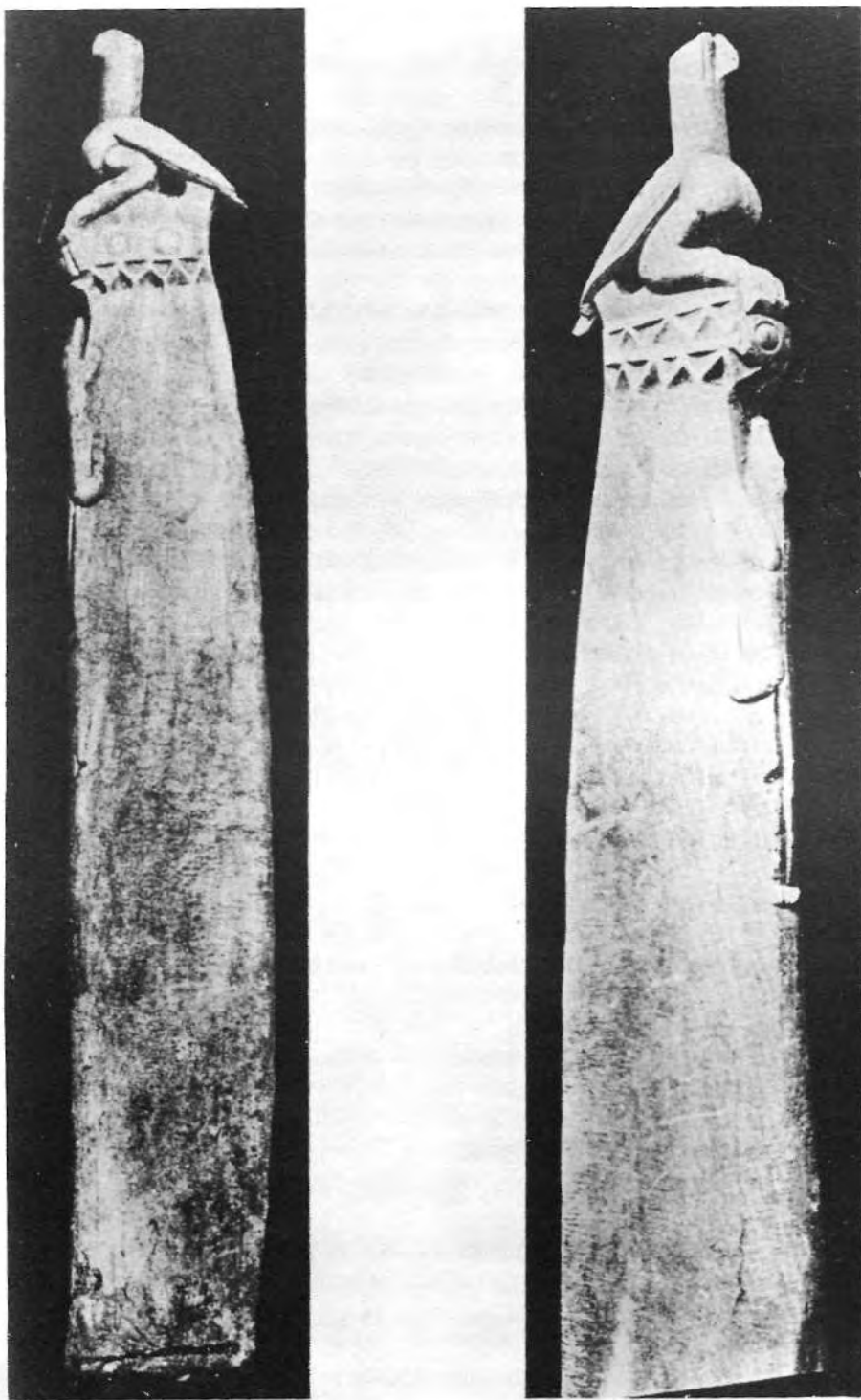
Loeb demonstrates that among the Ovambo peoples (who are associated with the peoples derived from Rhodesia) there are undoubted Mediterranean influences, some of which arrived through Arabia. He draws attention to the lack of masks and idols, as in contradistinction with the Negroid peoples of West Africa, and this he attributes to the Ovambos' being a cattle-raising people. However, the influence of Hebraic and Islamic civilisation on the east coast of Africa (as we have demonstrated, and particularly in regard to Hebrew influence among the Lemba) would be a powerful factor in making idols unlucky for these peoples. The lack of idols appears to be a negative exotic influence among the Negroid peoples.

The same authority looks to the north and east of Africa as the source of origin of the early Mediterranean culture traits among these Bantu.<sup>17</sup>

Besides the concept of divine-kingship, sun-worship, a high-god, and veneration of the moon, those peoples who derived from peoples who had been influenced by the Zimbabwean civilisation had other non-Negroid concepts such as the worship of sacred stones. This is common to all branches of the Caucasoids, Hamito-Semitic and Indo-European, from the British Isles to the sacred Black Stone at Mecca,<sup>18</sup> and beyond.

Beer-making is common to all African peoples, but the significant thing is that the word for it, which is *dowra* or *dora* in Rhodesia, is the same as that to be found among the Cushitic peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia. Bent says that it is also belonging to Arabia, and that the beer is made in the same way.<sup>19</sup>

Mead (probably mead-ale) made from honey is found among tribes derived from Rhodesia who have traits of the Zimbabwean culture and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this is from the same source. Mead,



Zimbabwe birds with disk, chevron and crocodile motifs.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

*tej*, is still the national drink of Ethiopia and was formerly widespread among the Caucasoid peoples.<sup>20</sup>

Many more traits could be cited which clearly indicate that such peoples as the Ovambo, Lemba, Venda, Rosvis, and similar peoples, have many elements of material culture which are exotic among Negroid peoples and belong to cultures coming down the east coast of Africa from the north. This makes it all the more evident that we cannot think of the peoples associated with the Zimbabwean civilisation as having pure indigenous "African" culture at all. Superimposed on what is Negroid are all these other cultural traits witnessing to the infiltration of Semitic, Cushitic, Hamitic, and even Indonesian, Indian, and Chinese, influence.

The field of philology and etymological origins is a complex one. Therefore, it would be unwise to rest any case entirely upon these disciplines. Nevertheless, when there is accumulative evidence from so many sources such as we have mentioned, which are pointing in one direction, one may at least draw attention to certain parallels between the names found in one place with those of another. If several such similarities occur in these circumstances, at least some of them may be expected to be correct. Where there are the same place-names in two different countries it usually means that there has been a settlement of the people of the one country in that of another. For it has always been the habit of civilised man to take his place-, king- and god-names with him and plant them in new lands. Thus the Britons took their name to Brittany, and the Irish Scots to Scotland. The Scots of Scotland created Nova Scotia; the English, New England; the Dutch, New Amsterdam which the English turned into New York. Royalty are commemorated in Charlottesville, Williamstown, Charlestown, and Jamestown, and so on.

In the same way the Sabaeans, from Saba, planted their national name in Ethiopia.<sup>21</sup> Since in Rhodesia we have the River Sabi, and the region which was its hinterland of which Sofala was the Arab capital, was known as Sabia, there is a strong presumption of a connection with the Sabaeans. Thomas Baines<sup>22</sup> tells us that in his time the memory of the Queen of Sheba was still preserved among the Arabs of Sofala. One does not need to accept the view of any actual connection between the Queen of Sheba (Saba) and Sabia (Sofala) to believe that it is fairly obvious that there is a connection between Sheba (Saba) or the Yemen and Sabia (Sofala) and Sabi.

The name Kariba has a parallel in the name of a Priest-King of Saba, Kariba-ili-Water.

We may see in Khami a name based on the Sabaean *hamaya* which means to protect, and gave rise to such a Sabaean name as Khami-Fal.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise Dhlo-Dhlo might have some relation to Dhu-Alam, a sanctuary of Siw or Llumquh.<sup>24</sup>

While we are aware of all the arguments which have occurred about the origin of Zimbabwe and its variants, noted from the times of the Portuguese chroniclers onwards, this name might well be only a Bantuisation of an

earlier name. But having been equated with Bantu words which might indicate variously a court, or a stone enclosure, such names would proliferate. Nevertheless the original source of the name of Great Zimbabwe could very well have an earlier origin in the Sabaeen Sinbani<sup>25</sup> which refers to Sin (the Moon God). As Zimbabwe was dominated by what appears to be a Temple complex such a name would be apposite, as, whatever other god was worshipped there, if these people were Sabaeans, Sin or Illumquh was adored at Zimbabwe.

Perhaps less controversial than the foregoing are some of the words in use which are clearly not Bantu. Such words as *muali* for God, which we discuss in this book; *mast* for milk, which is found in the East; and *dowra* or *doro* for beer, used in M'toko's and Makoni's country, which is the word used in Ethiopia and Arabia.<sup>26</sup> This latter is in contrast to the normal word which is, in Manicaland, *wa-wa*, or *mtwala*, which is of Zulu origin. The Karangan word *mbanje*, which was in use in the time of dos Santos in 1609, is obviously to be linked with the Indian *bharg*, Persian *bangi*, and is not an indigenous word for hemp or hashish.

To this list may be added those names of Semitic origin used by the Lemba and other Bantu peoples to which Mr. Mullan has drawn attention.

1. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.204.
2. **Dart, R. A.** Foreign influences of the Zimbabwe and pre-Zimbabwe eras, *Nada*, Salisbury, Rhodesia: Native Affairs Department, 1955, p.29.
3. **Ruhmann, Georges** Fringe of Europe and Islam. *Larousse Encyclopaedia of Ancient and Mediaeval History*. London: The Companion Book Club, 1965, p.353.
4. *Article: Costume (Bantu)*, in: *Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*, compiled by: Eric Rosenthal, London: Frederick Warne, 1965, p.127.
5. **Darlington, C. D.** *The Evolution of Man and Society*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969, p.648. -
6. *Ibid*, p.658.
7. **Saad, Zaki Y.** *The Excavations at Helwan: art and civilization in the First and Second Egyptian Dynasties*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969, p.190.
8. **Murdock, G. P.** *Africa: its peoples and culture history*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.209.
9. **Kirby, P.** *The Musical instruments of the native races of South Africa*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934, p.65.
10. **Loeb, Edwin M.** *In Feudal Africa*. Bloomington, Indiana: University Press, 1962, p.202.
11. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, p.57.
12. **Murdock, G. P.** *Africa: its peoples and culture history*, p.209.
13. **Dahl, O. C.** *Malgache et maajan, Avhandlinger utgitt av Egede-Instituttet*, Oslo, 1951, vol. 3, 3 p.1.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

14. **Dyen, I.** Review of O. C. Dahl, 1951. *Language*, 1953, vol. 29, p.577.
15. **Murdock**, *Africa* . . . . . p.209.
16. **Loeb**, *In Feudal Africa*. . . . . , p.178.
17. *Ibid.* p.14.
18. *Ibid*, p.371.
19. **Bent**, *Ruined Cities*. . . . . , p.57.
20. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** *Wassail! In Mazers of Mead*, London: Phillimore, 1948, p.169.
21. **Bent**, *Ruined Cities*. . . . . , p.229. —
22. **Baines, Thomas** *The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa*. London: 1877, p.vi.
23. **Hommel, Fritz** *Ancient Hebrew Tradition as illustrated by The Monuments*. London: S.P.C.K., 1897, p.322.
24. *Ibid*, p.319 note.
25. *Ibid*. p.63.
26. **Bent**, *The Ruined Cities*. . . . . , p.57.

## CHAPTER

# 5

### The Megalithic and Foreign Character of the Rhodesian Zimbabwean Culture; and its Relationship to Structures in the Mediterranean Area and Arabia

THE MEGALITHIC civilisation, starting from the Mediterranean, passed westwards to the Atlantic and gradually reached north-west Europe. For instance, Stonehenge is dated about 1700 B.C. In the Mediterranean area, in Sardinia, the Nuraghi complex, to which we shall refer later in more detail, has been dated about 1500 B.C. In the Balearic Islands we have the Talyots, while in Malta there is a series of megalithic Temples which precede Stonehenge in date. Gradually this culture also spread eastwards reaching, for instance, as far away as the west coast of India. It seems to have been associated with the spread of certain religious concepts.

Its appearance east and south of Suez, in Arabia and further afield, is later than in the Mediterranean, and it becomes progressively later as we get away from the Mediterranean—until in some places its date reaches the Christian era.

The character of the stonework may vary somewhat according to the character of the stone being worked by the megalithic builder. Nevertheless, if we examine the megalithic civilisation as a whole we shall find that the buildings were all made of drystone "dyking", that is, by the art of laying stones without mortar in such a way that enormous structures could be built which have lasted down to our times. The ability to do this is a highly advanced art in itself, and is always likely to be the result of a long tradition of craftsmanship in this field.

If the Zimbabwean complex had been discovered in Europe and the Near East, archaeologists would have proclaimed it without hesitation as a part of the megalithic civilisation. It is only because it is in Central Africa that it is treated in isolation. In fact, since sea-power covers great distances, it was easier for offshoots of a Mediterranean culture to reach Mozambique than for the transmission overland of a similar cultural transplantation from Germany to Spain or similar distances. Therefore, one cannot treat the Zimbabwean in isolation from the other megalithic cultures.

While in no sense making any claim for an antiquity for such remains as that of Great Zimbabwe as comparable with that of the Nuraghi of Sardinia,



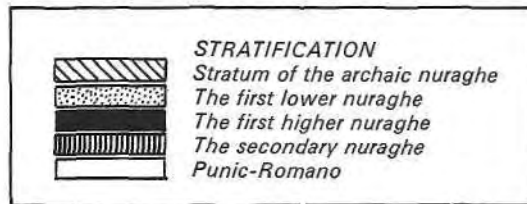
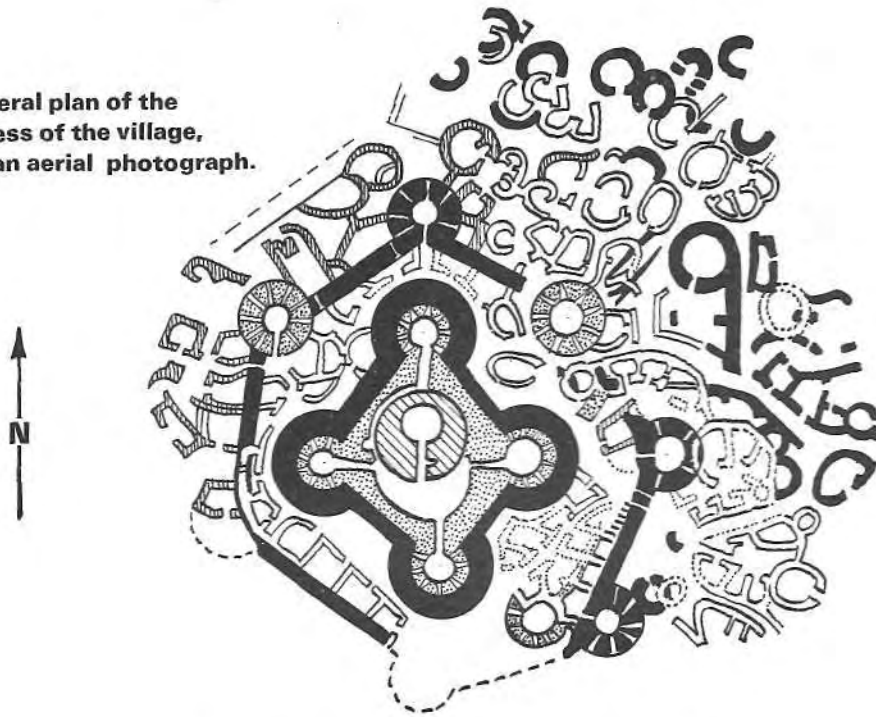
The Nuraghe of Barumini showing the fortress-like structure overlooking the surrounding town.

which would be unreasonable since the further we get away from the Mediterranean the later will be the date of these monuments, yet we can find some striking similarities between them. Furthermore, the difference in time and place make for differences of use and evolution of forms. Nevertheless, there is a basic megalithic unity of all these structures no matter how they may have evolved differently from land to land and continent to continent.

For example, if we take the great Nuraghe of Barumini in Sardinia as a case in point, we find that we have a fortress surrounded by its town, as, in effect but not in design, we find in the Acropolis and the so-called "Temple" (the town) at Great Zimbabwe. Now the point to observe is that the narrow passageways between the high stone walls are analogous in every way when we compare the two sites. Not only so, but we find exactly the same motifs in some of the stone courses. Here we have the herring-bone and other patterns, and the high circular walls such as we see in the Zimbabwe civilisation. No one can walk through the ruins of Barumini without immediately being reminded of Great Zimbabwe. Such similarities cannot be fortuitous even if two thousand years were to separate them in their dates of creation and occupation.

## THE NURAGHE AT NURAXI, BARUMINI.

General plan of the  
fortress of the village,  
based on an aerial photograph.

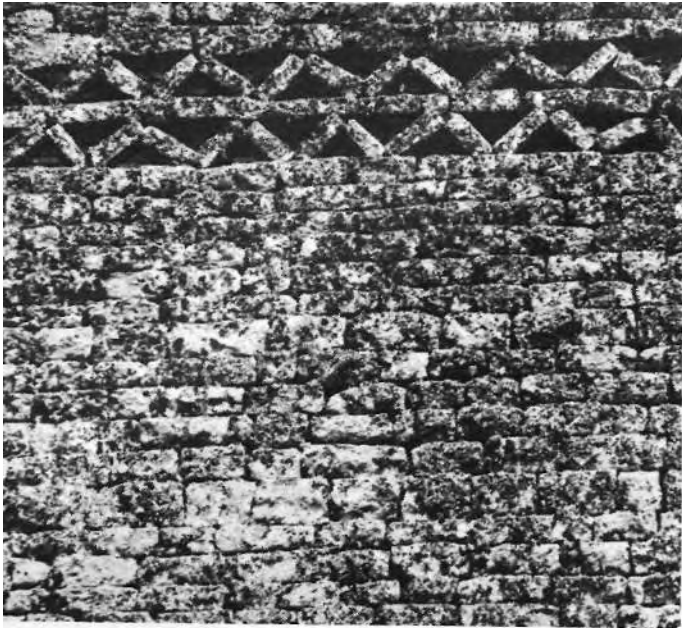


When we come to examine the Great Zimbabwe ruins we find clear evidence that doors existed for the various circular or oval-shaped houses. Not only have the Negroid races never built in stone without outside influence, but nowhere did they employ wooden doors for their huts. A piece of wood pushed into position from inside and barred by a wooden peg has always sufficed.\*

A prominent feature of the ruins at Great Zimbabwe is a tall circular tower, with which we will deal later when we come to discuss phallicism. This is a concept we never find in Negroid civilisation. Not only did the Negroes not build in stone, but they have no traditions of such a stone tower. On the other hand the tower is a concept which is basic to the old world civilisation of Eurasia. We have it in the ziggurat of Babylonia, the

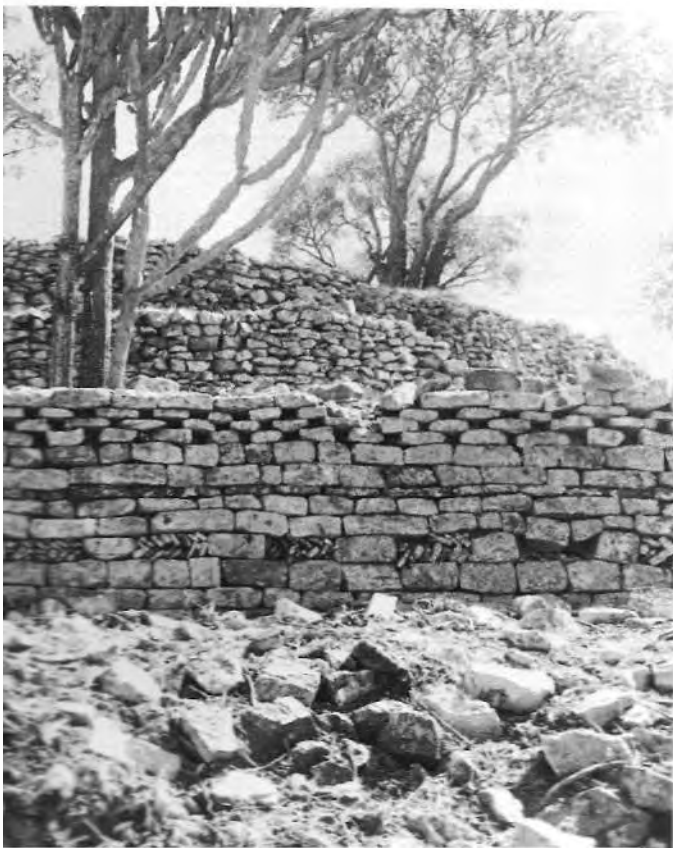
\*William Harvey Brown describes this as a feature in the Shona huts. (*On the South African Frontier*, London: Sampson Low, 1899, p.199).





Left: The chevron pattern on the 30 ft.-high wall, Temple, Zimbabwe Ruins.

Right: An example of walling at the Naletali Ruins, showing chevron, cord, herring-bone and chequer-board patterns.



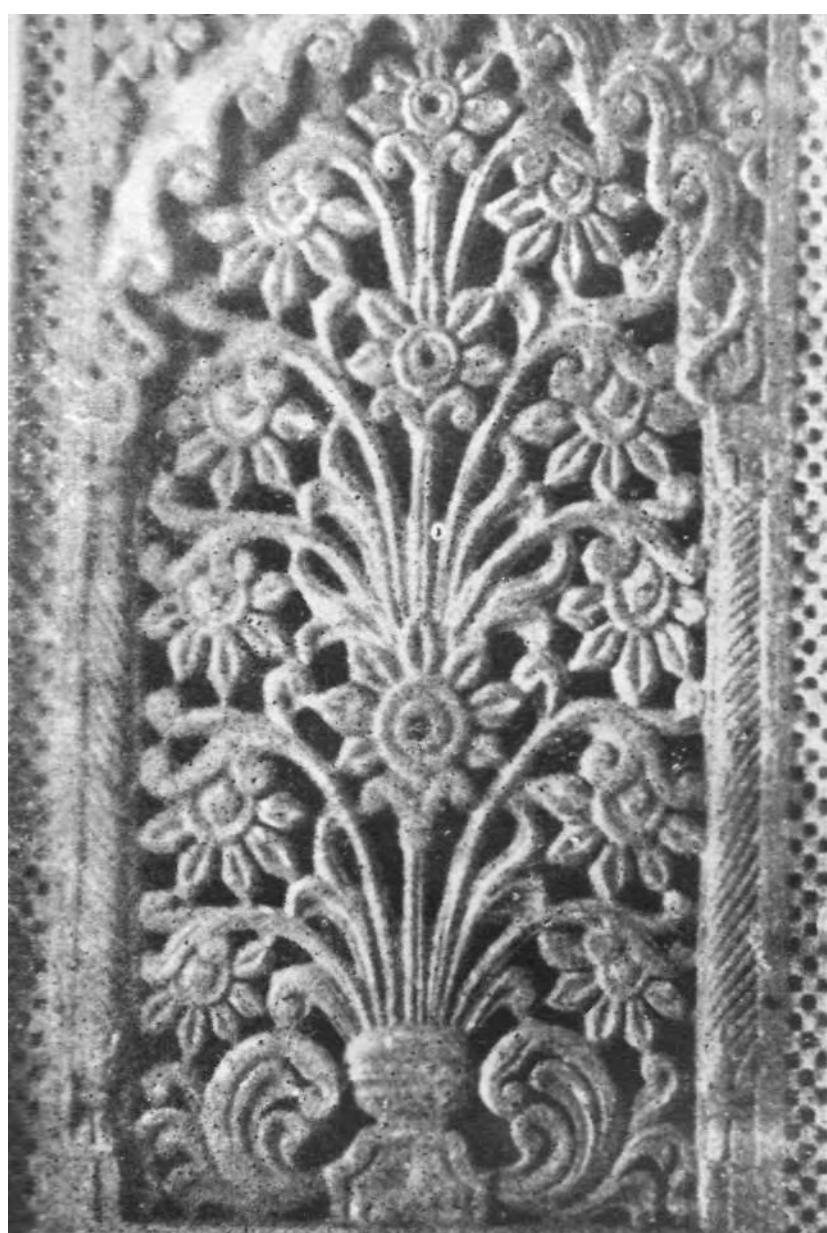
Left: Walling at Shaganja Ruins showing chequer and herring-bone pattern.



Above: Herring-bone and sun-disk patterns on a ruined mosque, Pemba Island, *circa* 10th century A.D.



Left: Ancient Egyptian relief showing the chevron pattern representing the water of life in the motif of the clothing.



Cord and chequer pattern on a  
Zanzibar mosque.

tower of the Indian temple, and in many other examples. In general terms it was probably phallic, as probably are the megalithic standing stones, and as, some think, are even the spires of Christian churches—although all memory of such an association has been lost to those who use them. Even the tall towers of the mosques of Islam probably have the same derivation. At Malindi, on the Kenya coast, in the ground of the ancient mosque, is such a tower which is clearly phallic. As we have already observed, not only have we no evidence of the Negroid peoples building towers elsewhere, but they have no indigenous cultural association with phallicism. Therefore the finding of a tower of a phallic character at Great Zimbabwe is consistent with the megalithic background of this civilisation of southern Central Africa.

We shall deal later with the objects met with in Zimbabwe. All that need be said here is that many of them have the appearance of European megalithic artefacts, and some have the same motifs. For instance a portable mother-goddess figurine from the megalithic religion in the western Mediterranean has perceptible similarities to a decorated soapstone beam from Great Zimbabwe.

The herring-bone pattern which is found throughout the megalithic culture of Rhodesia, to which we have drawn attention in the Nuraghi, is a common motif in the megalithic in Europe, and it is also characteristic of Sumerian buildings.<sup>1</sup>

Another motif common to the civilisations which have a megalithic basis is the cord or rope pattern. This will be found not only on prehistoric megalithic monuments, but it will be seen even today in houses occupied by Berber people in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa as well as on the walls of the Old Palace at Riyadh, Arabia.<sup>2</sup>

The chequered pattern which is obviously derived from similar sources, prehistoric and historic, is to be found in Mediterranean and Arabian architecture. The example here shown is from the Atlas Mountains. It will be found in buildings in places as far away as Samarra, in Irak, where it is frequently used on Islamic buildings.<sup>3</sup>

The chequered pattern which is formed by each alternate stone being inset deeper into the wall gives the same appearance as the lattice type of masonry found in Arabic and Persian architecture, and it is hard to conclude that what we are seeing in Rhodesia is not a reproduction of this style as it is seen throughout those countries.

The chevron pattern is well established on megalithic and later buildings of the same group of peoples and their civilisation from Europe, North Africa to Arabia, and beyond. For instance, J. D. Evans<sup>4</sup> illustrates a chevron-patterned decorated jug from the cremation cemetery (1400 B.C.) on the Tarxien temples in Malta. The same chevron pattern is found on earthenware on an amphora found at Mycenae, dated seventh century B.C.<sup>5</sup> This design probably signifies water, and so it is a reference to life. The ancient civilised White peoples considered the essence of life was to be found in water. Among the Egyptians all men were born from the eyes of Horus, except Negroes who came from other parts of his body. This is linked, obviously, with the idea that the creative tears of Ra, the sun-god, fell as showers upon the Earth. In Babylonia Ea, God of the Deep, was Lord of Life. There the river was also regarded as the source of life blood.<sup>6 7</sup>

The dentelle pattern is, perhaps, not so common, but it is found particularly as an architectural motif in Asia. For instance, in India it is found on Moslem monuments of historic times.<sup>8</sup> While examples can be found in Arabia, as in the interior decoration of the Palace, Riyadh.<sup>9</sup>

The type of walling shows the same structure and technique even when the buildings are for different uses. The very faults in the bonding of the stonework are the same, as can well be seen if we compare the Maltese Temple of Hagar Qim with the Rhodesia monuments. Without taking care to see



An aerial view of Zimbabwe.

that each stone overlaps the junction of those below, both cultures were able, for all that, to build walls that actually stood up securely.

Even when probably used for different purposes, the irregular oval religious structures with their laneways between walls have a similar appearance. One captures the spirit of conception, techniques, and uses, time and time again, when comparing megalithic buildings and those derived from this cultural development, even when belonging to quite different periods of time. This is forcibly brought out if we compare photographs of Zimbabwe and such a place as Duma in Arabia.<sup>10</sup>

Above the town of Great Zimbabwe, usually called the Temple, there is the fortress described as the Acropolis. Here we get a repetition of megalithic buildings. However, the walls have stones erected to give the im-



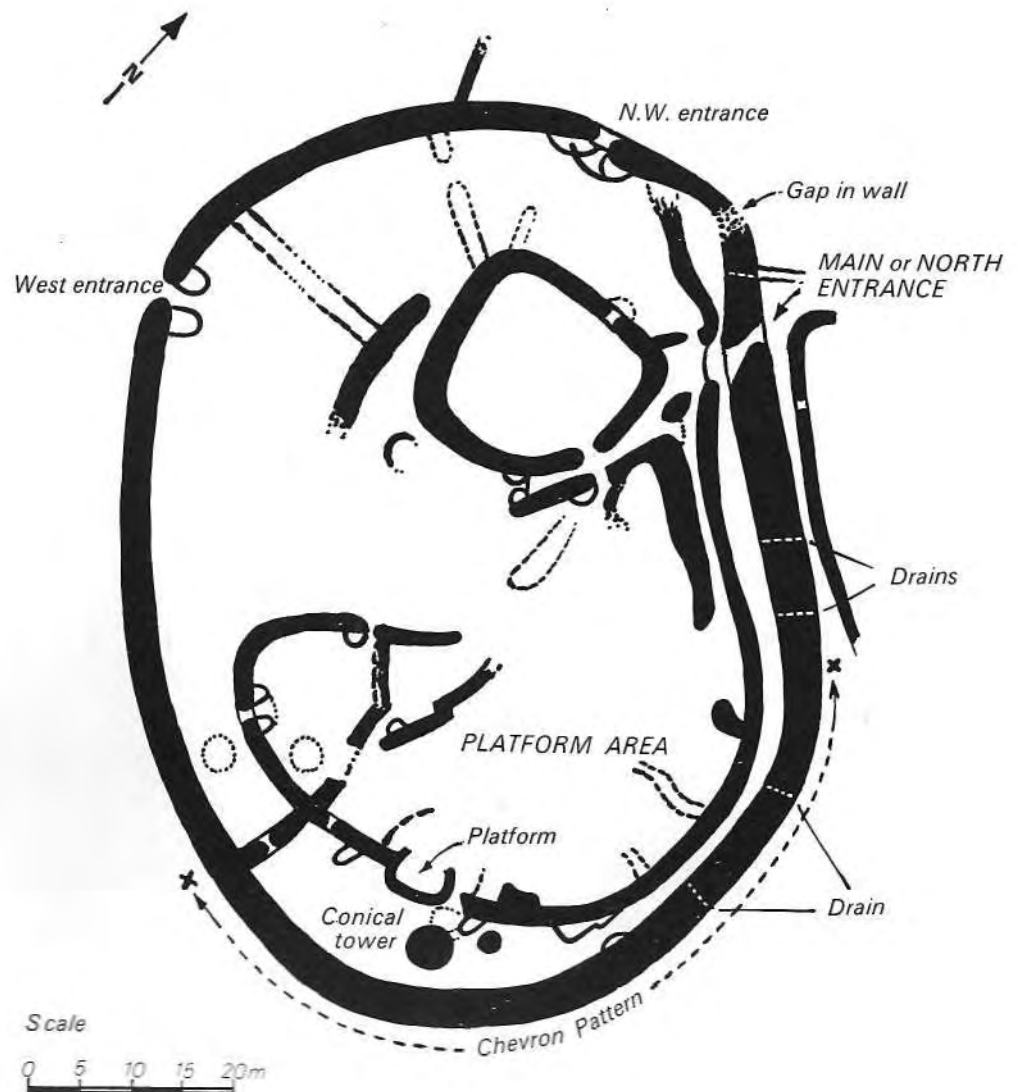


An aerial view of the Sabeen Temple of Awwam, *circa* 750 B.C.

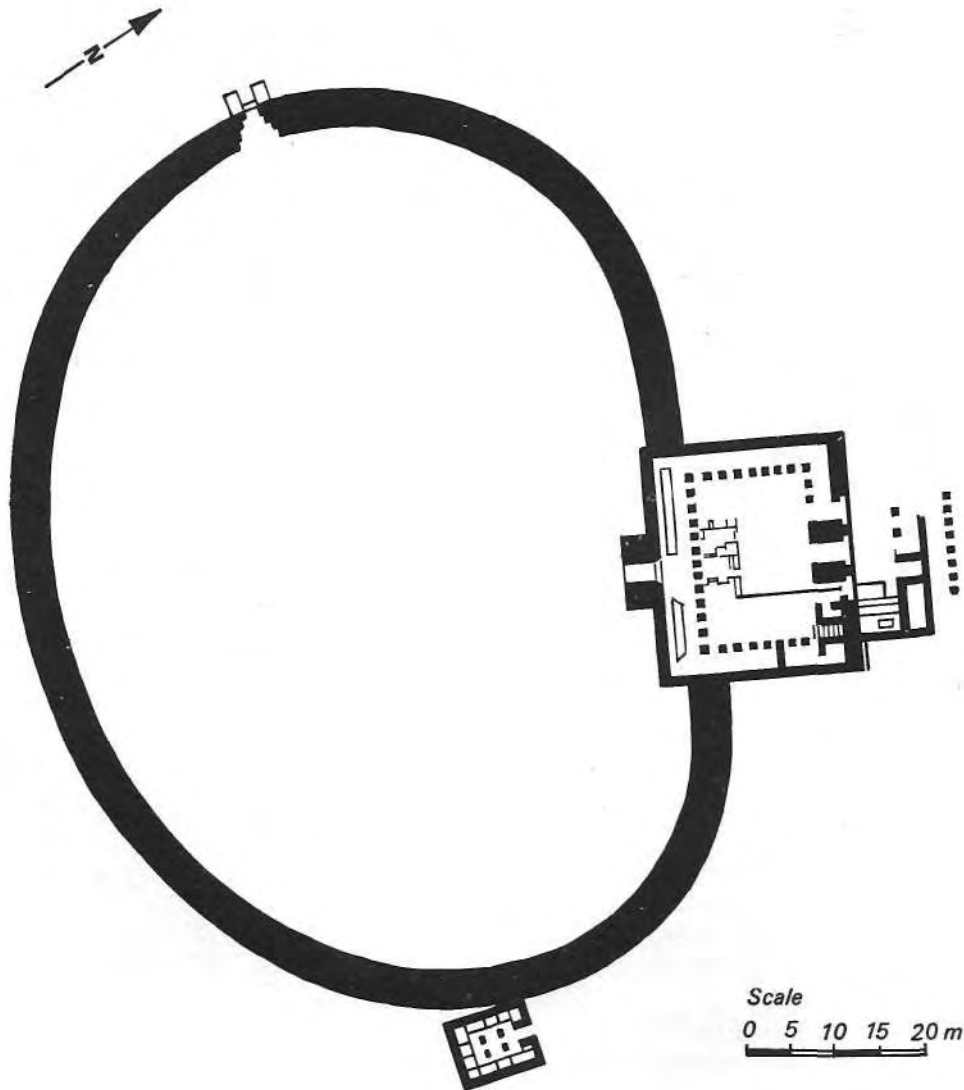
pression of towers or "turrets". These seem to be reminiscent of the castellated architecture to be found in Arabic structures. In so far as that is so, they would indicate a later period for these structures than the rest; or, if not, for these additions to them, bringing the final stages of the building down to mediaeval, or near mediaeval, times. Whatever the date, they would indicate an influence from the Near East.

These structures indicate a megalithic origin, in contrast to the structures throughout Negroid Africa where there are no comparable buildings. Such elementary attempts at stone wall building as are found among Bantu peoples can be shown to be the work of peoples known to have been under the influence of the Zimbabwe civilisation. An example of this is the Dzata in Vendaland.<sup>11</sup> Therefore the complete absence of any knowledge of great

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION



**A PLAN OF THE ELLIPTICAL  
RUIN, GREAT ZIMBABWE.**



**GROUND PLAN OF THE TEMPLE OF AWWAM.**

**This is the Temple of 'Ilumquh  
in the city of Marib, Yemen.**



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

stone wall erections among other Negroid races in Africa is more than significant. As Sir H. H. Johnston<sup>12</sup> has pointed out:

"But nine-tenths of the Negro race in the condition in which they were found by the modern European absolutely ignored the use of stone for any purpose."

He points out that the exceptions to this rule are found in some Negroid tribes of West Africa, and also among the Negroid-Neolithic people of the Upper Nile, all of whom had been under the ancient influence of Libya and Egypt. He makes it clear that building in stone was utterly foreign to the customs of all Negro tribes not associated with stone-building Caucasians.

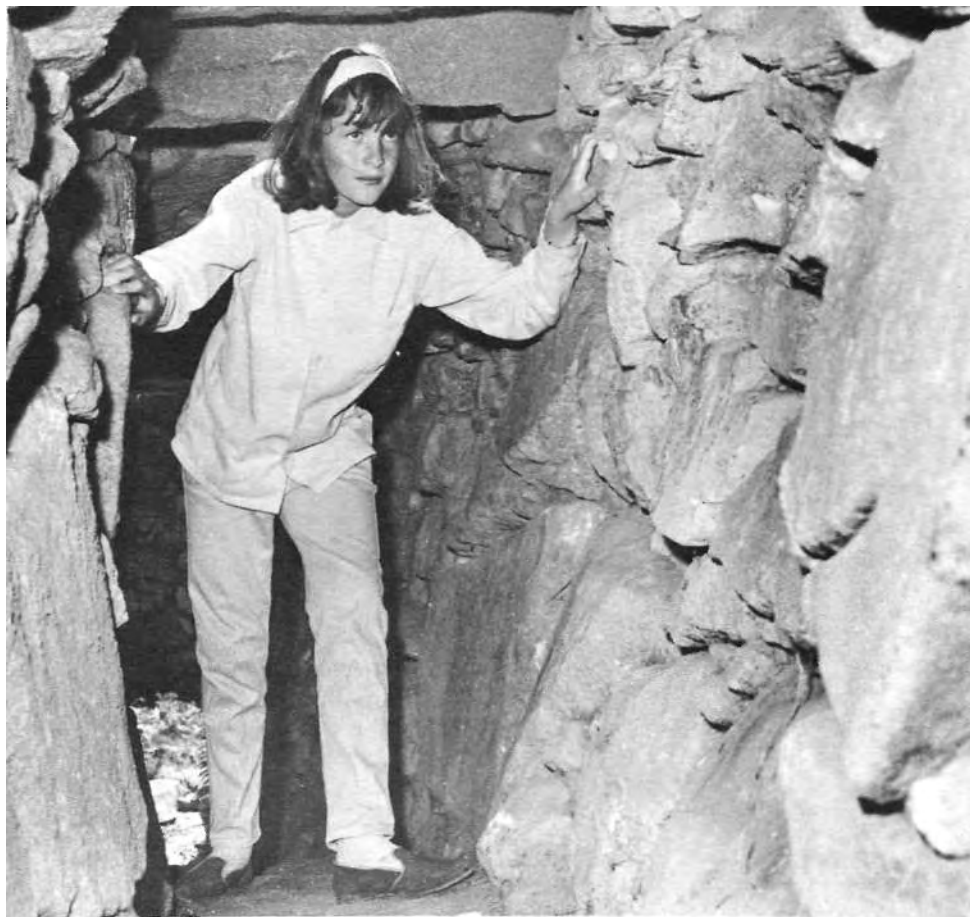
Therefore, we are on strong ground if we conclude that were the Zimbabwe civilisation indigenous then we would expect to find evidence of a stone-building technology among Negroid peoples generally. It is quite unreasonable to conclude that we have a completely unique native development of urban stone-building techniques in a particular place in Africa (where it is known to be close to ports bringing in overseas influences) when at the same time we are not able to find it also developing in other parts of the Negroid world.

Another typically megalithic character of the Zimbabwean monuments is that they all have circular and oval forms, whether we are considering the structures within the main walls, or those walls themselves. This is a characteristic throughout the megalithic civilisations, whether we are dealing with fortified places or temples, such as the Nuraghi, brochs, Stonehenge, or those to be found in parts of Arabia.\* The parallels are particularly close between the Rhodesian monuments and buildings in Arabia, some of which we have briefly mentioned *en passant*.

Professor Loeb<sup>13</sup> has provided sufficient evidence to show that the Ovambo are one of those peoples, like the Rozvis and Venda, who show unmistakable inheritance of cultural motifs from the Zimbabwean civilisation. Not content with making that connection, he is able to go further and illustrate the outline of the chiefly kraal of the Ovambo, compare it with the outline of Zimbabwe, and then proceed from that to show the relationship of both to the great historic temple of Marib, in the Yemen. The plan of Marib given by Wendell Phillips<sup>14</sup> shows how close it is to the Ovambo chief's kraal. Even the forecourt of the entrance has the same outline as that of Marib.

Gerald de Gaury,<sup>15</sup> in describing Duma, a town mentioned in *Genesis* to which we have already made reference, describes the character of the walling and narrowness of the streets which are clearly a prototype of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it is evident that in the Arabian architecture of Riyadh and the Wadi Hanifs,<sup>16</sup> the same concept of upright pillars that one finds in a

\*We examined the various Zimbabwean structures in Rhodesia and those of the megalithic civilizations elsewhere, and we were struck by the outstanding parallelism between them, before reading the book of Bent on *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* in its recent reprint edition. Therefore, this opinion was formed independently of Bent's where he specifically refers to the Maltese megalithic structures and the Nuraghi of Sardinia. He was working from published accounts, as distinct from our own experience of knowing these megalithic buildings from studying them on the spot. It is, however, singular, and, we would imagine, important, that we have both arrived at the same conclusion. (R. Gayre of Gayre).



Above: An underground megalithic type of "pit-dwelling".

Left: The entrance to a "pit-dwelling" Inyanga, showing the use of lintel, threshold and strong foundation stones.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

more primitive form in the top of the walls at Zimbabwe and at the Acropolis is to be found.

We have already given considerable evidence of the contact from the earliest times between Arabia and the east coast of Africa. Since we are considering the relation between the architecture of Rhodesia and Arabia based in part on work of Wendell Phillips, it is not out of place to quote his remarks on these contacts.<sup>17</sup> He tells us that:

"East Africa . . . has many close ties to Arabia, and Somaliland was one of the ancient sources of incense, some of which was shipped to Arabian ports and thence up the incense route to the Mediterranean world. The islands and towns of Africa's east coast contain many Hadramis from the Wadi Hadhramaut."

The realisation of a link between the Temple of Marib and Zimbabwe, while cited by modern writers, is now quite old. Bent mentioned it long ago<sup>18</sup> when he described a communication which he had received from Professor D. M. Muller, the Viennese expert at that time on Southern Arabian archaeology, in which he remarked upon parallels between the Zimbabwe civilisation and features with which he was familiar in Southern Arabia. He drew attention to the ruin called the Harem of Bilkis which is east-north-east of Marib, in the Yemen. This elliptical building had a parallel in the Almaqah temple at Sirwah which has the same form. The Marib temple's longest diameter is about 375 feet and its shortest diameter 250 feet. Incidentally this is the Temple of Ilumquh, not the Temple of Bilkis (Hahram Bilkis) as the Yemenis have called it.<sup>19</sup> The temple itself was called Awwam, and the god Ilumquh to whom it was dedicated was the moon god. In this temple there appear sixty-four false windows of imitation lattice in stone. While these are faithful reproductions of lattice, we think that the use of chequer pattern in Rhodesia is possibly an effort to reproduce the same effect by less-skilled sculptors and masons precluded from using hammer and chisel because of the more primitive milieu in which they were working.

The inscription at Marib runs round one-fourth of its circumference as does the chevron pattern at Zimbabwe, which would suggest that, in a primitive interpretation of the Arabian culture in Rhodesia, a symbolic pattern (of the water of life) conveys its message in the same conventionalised manner. In the Arabian building the inscriptions dedicate the building to the goddess Almaqah. This goddess is also the same as Bilkis. Hamadani, the Arab geographer, says that Ialmaqah was Venus. From this it is clear that Ialmaqah or Almaq, and Queen Bilkis are the same. Therefore, within a megalithic civilisation having affinities with that of Great Zimbabwe, we have a Mother Goddess, sometimes equated with Venus, apart from any other religious concepts. Actually we shall show that there was also the concept of a sun-god in Central Africa.

What we appear to have, therefore, in the Zimbabwean architectural structures, are megalithic buildings which have features in common with similar building techniques with which we are familiar in the prehistoric megalithic civilisations. In addition we have motifs which, in some cases,



Hill terracing east of the Inyanga mountain range.



An example of terracing found in the highest mountain area of the Yemen at Jebel Harraz, between Sa'an and the Red Sea.

have become associated with later civilisations which belong to the succedent peoples in the same European, north African, and Near Eastern parts of the world.

Therefore it would seem evident that we have at Zimbabwe, buildings which, while they owe their inspiration to the megalithic period, are in fact later in date than most of the megalithic buildings of the Old World with which we are familiar. Nevertheless the relationship to the structures erected by peoples of the Caucasoid races further north is clear.

Elsewhere we shall have cause to refer to the vast area of terracing and supporting irrigation channels at Inyanga. These must, however, be mentioned here, as they are just as much megalithic structures as the ruined

cities of Rhodesia. Just as parallels for the megalithic buildings themselves lie closest to Southern Arabia, so does this great irrigation complex which is similar in so many respects to the vast irrigation systems which have been discovered in prehistoric Southern Arabia. There, many of the architectural features reflect a mode of construction of Mediterranean origin.<sup>20</sup> This accounts for the parallels which some have drawn between Inyanga and terracing in the Mediterranean lands. Incidentally Professor Gordon Childe's dictum<sup>21</sup> should not be forgotten: the restriction of water supplies, which leads to such irrigation schemes, places a sanction in the hands of the community. This ought to lead eventually to a political unification of the whole area. This means in fact that Inyanga could not exist unless there were a central authority in Rhodesia at that time, and the great cities and forts could not have existed without the terraced agriculture to feed them. Consequently, by the time the megalithic monuments of all kinds were built, Rhodesia's prehistoric and proto-historic civilisation had ceased to consist of numerous independent groups and had developed a technological way of life under some form of central government.

1. **Kramer, Samuel Noah** *Cradle of Civilization*. Netherlands: Time-Life International (Nederland), 1968, p.32.
2. **Gaury, Gerald de** *Arabia Phoenix*. London: George Harrap, 1946, illustration between pp.64 and 65.
3. **Wheeler, Mortimer** Iraq: Samarra, in: *Splendours of the East*, ed. by: Mortimer Wheeler. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965, p.24.
4. **Evans, J. D.** *Malta*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1963, figure 90.
5. **Lessing, Erich** *The Voyages of Ulysses*. London: Macmillan, 1966, figure 48.
6. **Mackenzie, Donald A.** *Myths of Babylon and Assyria*. London: Gresham, n.d., pp.44 and 48.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Page, J. Burton-Multan, Pakistan, in: *Splendours of the East*, ed. by: Mortimer Wheeler. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965, p.75.
9. **Gaury, Arabia**. . . . . illustration between pp.64 and 65.
10. *Ibid.*, plate facing p.33.
11. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** The Lembas and Vendas of Vendaland, *The Mankind Quarterly*, Edinburgh: vol. 8, 1966-67, p.3.
12. **Johnston, H. H.** *The Opening up of Africa*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1922, p.63.
13. **Loeb, E. M.** *In Feudal Africa*. Bloomington, Indiana: University Press, 1962, p.11.
14. **Phillips, Wendell** *Quataban and Sheba*. London: Gollanz, 1955, p.255.
15. **Gaury, Arabia**. . . . . , p.18, and plate facing p.33.
16. *Ibid.* Plate of Roof tops at Riyadh; and plate of Wadi Hanifa, Riyadh; between pp.64 and 65.
17. **Phillips, Quataban**. . . . . , p.29.
18. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.vii.
19. **Phillips, Quataban**. . . . . , p.256.
20. **Doe, D. B.** *Port of Aden Annual*. Aden: Port of Aden Trust, 1963-64, p.55.
21. **Childe, V. G.** *New Light on the Most Ancient East*. London: Kegan Paul, 1934, p.43.

## CHAPTER

# 6

### Saba or the Yemen as a Great Maritime Power

THUS FAR we have dealt with the navigational facts of the Indian Ocean, the exploration of the coasts, the circumnavigation of Africa, the mineral resources attracting settlement, the resultant importation of exotic plants and elements of material culture, and the megalithic character of the Zimbabwean civilisation. Later we shall deal with the huge amounts of gold extracted in ancient times which became a main cause of exploitation of Rhodesia and Mozambique. From all this it will become clear that East Africa was visited in its time by Phoenicians, Cushitic peoples, early pre-Islamic, and, later, Islamic Arabic explorers, Indian, Chinese, and even Malay settlers, before we come to the late Moslem power in East Africa which immediately preceded the coming of the Portuguese.

Before going on to deal in detail with the archaeological facts involved in the study of these Rhodesian monuments, it is of value to discuss briefly one of the great Semitic maritime powers of ancient times which must have been involved in any settlement and exploitation of the coast of East Africa. This is particularly important in the case of Saba. We have suggested<sup>1</sup> that the Sabaeans were an integral element of the development of the Zimbabwean civilisation. When that view was put forward, the writer had not read Bent's book on the subject and did not know he had come to the same conclusion though based on different data.

The kingdom of Saba is that from which the famous Queen of Sheba came to visit King Solomon. It is referred to in the Bible, and it is clear that it was a rich merchant nation engaged in the gold trade—a metal it brought from overseas, as Arabia itself is deficient in gold.

Tiglath Pileser II (733 B.C.) tells us on the Assyrian inscriptions that Teima, Saba, and Haipa paid him tribute of gold, silver, and much incense. Similarly Sargon (715 B.C.) in his *Annals* mentions the tribute of Shamsi, Queen of Arabia, and of Itamara of the land of Saba, which included gold, fragrant spices, horses and camels.<sup>2</sup> Eratosthenes (276-194 B.C.) calls the Sabaeans one of four great nations over against Ethiopia whose capital was Mariaba (Mariab on the inscriptions), or Marib as we generally call it now.

This account is followed by that of Agatharchides (120 B.C.) who speaks in glowing terms of the wealth and greatness of the Sabaeans. Artemidorus (100 B.C.) quoted Strabo to the same effect.

The Sabaean colonies in Africa were very early established in Ethiopia as is proved by the language and writing characteristics of the Ethiopians.

According to the *Periplus* of an anonymous contemporary of Pliny (Chapter 16) in the first century A.D., some parts of the African coast were under the suzerainty of the Sabaean kings as late as the Sabaeo-Himyaritic period. The district of Azania (Somaliland and Kenya coastlands) was held for the Sabaean rulers by the Governor of Maphoritis (Ma'afir) and was exploited by a Sabaean company.

Putting aside the earlier Hebrew influences in Saba, in our era the Sabaeans' widespread commerce brought them under Christian and Jewish influence. As a result they were converted to Christianity under Constantius II by the Indian Theophilus, but another account credits this event to the reign of Anastasius (491-518). Their ruler Dhu Nuwas became converted to Judaism, and from this event Ethiopia was led to invade the Yemen. This weakened both Christianity and Judaism and opened the way for conversion to Islam of the Arabian peoples.

The oldest coins (4th century B.C.) are copies of those of Athens and have the owl on them,<sup>3</sup> indicating the adoption of a bird cult, even if (though we believe they had) they did not possess one before. The Sabaeans worshipped the heavenly bodies, particularly the sun; the Sabaean Shams was a sun-goddess. The Sabaeans recognised Ishtar, who is Venus, and they also had a moon-god. With the sun-god they had, as is usual, phallic elements in their religion. These are cults, which we will come to see, are not without relevance to the religious concepts of Zimbabwe.

The Sabaean temples were noteworthy because of their elliptical form, and the people have left behind them remains of huge public works. Among the most noteworthy is The Great Dam of Marib possibly dating from 1700 B.C., indicating that from a very early period they were water engineers of great skill. Irrigation was, therefore, inherent in their civilisation. The application of such a skill to the irrigation problems of Rhodesia, such as are found in the Inyanga terracing, would have presented no difficulties. The construction of the Great Dam is attributed to the father of Himyar the founder of the Himyaritic Dynasty. M. d'Arnaud describes its ruins as comprising a gigantic wall 2 miles long and 175 paces wide. The water which was stored by means of this enormous dam was allowed to escape by dykes or openings at different levels, so that irrigation might be maintained. It is supposed to have burst under exceptional pressure in about A.D. 100.<sup>4</sup>

As we have already indicated, Sabaean Arabs are known to have existed as a trading colony in Canton at the beginning of the seventh century A.D. as well as having had lordship over Somalia and the coastlands of present-day Kenya. Since, from Biblical sources, we have evidence of the importance of Sheba, Sabia, or Saba as a mercantile power trading in gold, it is obvious



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

that Saba's influence in Africa and China was not something quite newly founded by the beginning of the seventh century of our era. While they were not the only Arab power with widespread connections and influence, they are the people who most probably, on the evidence before us, could have been the pioneers of Arab influence as far south as Mozambique before the arrival of later Islamic Arabs.

It should also be observed that the Sabaeans had been converted from heathenism to Christianity, under which they remained until, in the fifth century, they passed under a Jewish dynasty. The last king of this line was Du Nuwas (Dhu Nuwas) who was notorious for his persecution and massacre of the Christians. This led to the termination of his reign, following the invasion by Ethiopians on behalf of their fellow Christians. Following this, by the sixth century, Sabia was reduced to a Satrapy of Persia.

The fact of the matter is that in the Sabaeans we have a heathen people, who then became at least superficially Christian and Jewish in turn, but by the time they had suffered two conquests (with resultant pressure to migrate in the ships of which their merchants had plenty), they had not yet become Moslem. Therefore, all their influence on Africa and elsewhere, up to this time, was that of their original heathen civilisation with, latterly, some Christian and Jewish elements in it.

It was only after Mohammed died, in 632, that the Sabaeans became Moslems. The rapid spread of Islam throughout the Arabic world was largely due to the fact that so many Arab trading and conquering nations absorbed this religion and spread it all over their world. The early drive for trade which had carried them far and wide now had the added incentive of proselytism. This new religion followed the Arab nations into their new settlements overseas. But it does not follow that it established itself in the remoter places during the time of the active spread of Islamic culture in the centuries immediately following the life of the Prophet. In some cases the remoter colonies may have died out or become transformed in such a way that they were much less in contact with Arabic civilisation, before this could have occurred. This may well be a factor to take into consideration, if, as we seek to show, Sabaean Arabs had a part in the creation of the megaliths of Rhodesia, when we come to consider the Zimbabwean civilisation.

Although it is somewhat anticipating the proposals which we shall put forward in connection with the conclusions we have formed,\* we think that the following quotation from Sir T. H. Holdich should be given. It appears in his account of some aspects of the Yemen and Sabia. He tells us that there is a distinct connection between some of the rude stone relics in which inscriptions are found, and those which show sun worship found by Bent at Zimbabwe.

"Of the intimate connexion, if not actual relationship, which existed for many centuries before our era between the Sabaeans of

\*Independently of J. T. Bent, and which we have already published. (Gayre of Gayre, R. Zimbabwe, *The Mankind Quarterly*, Edinburgh: vol. 5, no. 4, April-June, 1965, p.212.)

Southern Arabia and those Arab people who worked the gold-mines of Mashonaland, and built forts to protect them, there can be little doubt. In the Wadi Sher, which leads northwards from the head of the Hadramut into the central districts, there exist the remains of at least one great Himyaritic town, with traces of megalithic buildings and a rock exhibiting Himyaritic inscriptions . . . . Large unhewn stones of the dolmen type, decorated on the inside with geometric patterns similar to those found in Mashonaland, together with buildings of extreme antiquity far anterior to those of other Himyaritic remains around them, also exist in the Wadi Sher. The general result of these discoveries is greatly to enlarge our views of the extent of ancient Sabaean civilisation in the Eastern world. . . . There can be little doubt that the builders of Zimbabwe came from the Arabian Peninsula."<sup>5</sup>

Since the time of Sir T. H. Holdich, modern scientists have been able to investigate to some extent the civilisations of southern Arabia, and the Yemen (Sheba or Saba) in particular. They have been able to show that this was a region of the highest civilisation with widespread cultural and trading links. A mere reading of the works of Wendell Phillips<sup>6 7</sup> leaves no doubt of this. Thus what the Semitic Phoenicians and Carthaginians were to the Mediterranean world and the seaboard of the Atlantic coasts of Europe and Africa, the same were the Sabaean and related Semitic peoples to the seaboard of the Indian Ocean. It was, therefore, no accident that in the time of King Solomon we have a community of interest which embraced the Phoenician Hiram King of Tyre and the Sabaean Queen of Sheba. What Phoenicia was north of the Red Sea, was Saba even more to the south of it. This was the situation from the second millennium B.C. (as the archaeological remains in Southern Arabia make quite clear) well into the first millennium A.D.

It is, therefore, to Saba that we look primarily for those non-African people who exploited the minerals of Southern Africa and were a material element in the creation of the Zimbabwean civilisation. As we have already shown,<sup>8</sup> the ethnographical evidence derived from a study of such people as the Lemba provides phenomena which clearly indicate that the Sabaean must have been the main alien element which left its imprint on such a people, whose derivation from Zimbabwe cannot be contraverted.

We are aware of the fact that Professor G. P. Murdock<sup>9</sup> looks to the megalithic Cushitic peoples of Azania as the basis of the megalithic population of Zimbabwe. That they were the original Zenj (before later admixture of Bantu created the Swahili Moslem) we have no doubt. That the Zenj came to have a part in the ethnology of Mozambique and Rhodesia is equally certain, as we shall show in due course. Therefore, we do not deny an Ethiopian influence in East Africa, and as far south as Rhodesia and Mozambique. It is merely a question of emphasis. We believe that the weight of

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

evidence (especially when we come to examine the cultural motifs in surviving peoples such as the Lemba) gives the leading role, at the time Zimbabwe and other ruins as we now know them were being planned, organised, and built, to Sabaean influences rather than any other.

1. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** Zimbabwe, *The Mankind Quarterly*, Edinburgh: vol. 5, no. 4, April-June, 1965, p.212.
2. **MuIIer, D. H.** Yemen, in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed. Edinburgh: Black, 1888, vol. 24, p.739.
3. *Ibid*, p.741.
4. **Holditch, Sir T. H.** Article on Arabia, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 10th ed. Edinburgh: Black and The Times, 1902, vol. 25, p.515.
5. **Holditch**, *Encyclopardia Brittanica*. . . . . , p.514.
6. **Phillips, Wendell** *Quataban and Sheba*. London: Gollanz, 1955.
7. **Phillips, Wendell** *Unknown Oman*. London: Longman, 1966.
8. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** *Ethnological Elements of Africa*. Edinburgh: The Armorial, 1966, p.138.
9. **Murdock, G. P.** *Africa: its people and their culture history*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.210.

## CHAPTER

# 7

### The Significance of the Falashas, the so-called Black Jews of Abyssinia

IF WE GO BACK to a far antiquity it would seem that Ethiopia had originally a groundwork of hunting Proto-Cushitic peoples (of Australoid type) and, on their western flanks, some Negroid contacts, with here and there Cappoid hunters of Bushmen strain. To the north in Nubia were similar Proto-Cushites who in time became dominated by the Hamitic culture of the Caucasoid Egyptian and other white North Africans. This Hamitic-speaking white stock also appears to have spread down the east coast of the Red Sea into south-west and southern Arabia.

Gradually the Proto-Cushitic peoples of Ethiopia became Hamitised, probably from the north in the first place. Thus in Nubia and Ethiopia there arose the Cushitic hybrid strain which is a cross, stabilised by natural selection, between the white Hamites (from whom the languages are derived) and the aboriginal Australoids. Nevertheless, since Bertram Thomas has shown linguistic and racial affinities with some elements in Southern Arabia<sup>1,2</sup> it seems clear that at a relatively later period there must have been a further migration of Caucasoid Hamites into Ethiopia from Arabia. This may have been about three thousand years ago. These people accomplished the Hamitisation of the Cushitic peoples of Ethiopia and left the present pattern of their languages behind them. They completed the evolution of the modern Cushitic or Ethiopic Hamitic type, as distinct from the true Caucasoid Hamites of the north coast of Africa. This Cushitic or Ethiopic type is in fact an Australoid-Caucasoid cross in which the more obvious White genes of hair and skin colour have been bred out, but the narrow face, lips, and nostrils retained, while the non-Negroid hair, which they have, is common to both parental stocks. Where woolly hair is found it is due to Negroid infiltration probably introduced by people from the Negroid west.

Following this Hamitic settlement there came another Caucasoid invasion. Ethiopia received, over many centuries, from the first millennium B.C. onwards, Semitic immigrants from south-west Arabia who seem to have displaced there the Hamites as the dominant people. The result of this was a Semitic civilisation, and linguistic penetration occurred in Abyssinia

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

in much the same way as the earlier Hamitic. This imposed itself on the racially black Hamito-Cushitic peoples who had, prior to that time, been under Hamitic cultural and linguistic domination. Out of this amalgam have come the present peoples of Ethiopia. Before this mixture occurred, and while still perceptibly Arabian in culture, these Caucasoid Semitic settlers ceased to be colonists and developed, in north-east Africa, states independent of their Arabian relatives. These new powers grew around the city and province of Axsum in northern Ethiopia and in the eastern Akkele Guzay region, which is now Eritrea. This migration and growth of new states under the influence of a Semitic culture took place from about the seventh century B.C. onwards. In this Semitic Abyssinian civilisation the arts and architecture derived from south-west Arabia existed, as they did in the homelands whence the settlers had originally come. Stone inscriptions were engraved in the Sabaean language, and their remains survive. Yet by the time we come to the last two pre-Christian centuries, the independence of these people from their Sabaean relatives in the homelands had been achieved. Of these Ethiopianised Sabaean, those of Axsum had gradually become predominant over those of Akkele Guzay by the first century A.D.

The peoples of the Axsumite empire began to probe to the north into Nubia (the Kingdom of Meroe) and to exert their influence across the Red Sea in the land of Saba itself. While this was going on, Axsum itself was absorbing Hellenised Egyptian influences through its port of Adulis, which is mentioned in the first century A.D. by the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*.

At the end of the third century A.D. the Ethiopians of Axsum invaded the Yemen; and in the fourth century the country became Christian.

Meanwhile Christianity and Judaism were spreading in south-west Asia. This led Dhu Nuwas, the last Himyaritic king, who had become Jewish, to persecute the Christians. In its turn it led to the conquest of south-west Asia by the Ethiopians in 525 A.D. As a result there occurred a flight of Judaized Arabs before the conquering Christian forces from Axsum. This is a material fact in connection with the ethnology of southern Africa to which we shall be compelled to return more than once. With the Persian conquest of south-west Arabia, at the end of the sixth century, the Ethiopian Christian government was overthrown and the proselytism by Islam of the Yemen (Saba) was made possible.

It is against this background that we have to see the emergence of the Falashas or so-called Black Jews of Abyssinia.

Although Ethiopia became Christian in the fourth century this was achieved on an existing structure of Arabian-Semitic cultural elements, in which some degree of Judaism was involved. It is significant that even today Ethiopian Christianity retains many Jewish rites and customs, such as the keeping of the Ark of the Covenant in each Church, and circumcision.

Edward Ullendorff<sup>3</sup> has made the point, and we think correctly, that the Falashas are Ethiopians of Agaw stock. Since the fourteenth century they have been established in the Semien and Kwara regions. Their cult is

a mixture of Judaism, paganism, and some Christian elements. They know of the *Pentateuch* (but not the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*); they have no knowledge of Hebrew; they observe the Sabbath, which, indeed, they worship as a deity, and carry out circumcision and clitoridectomy. It would appear that Axsum was first Judaic-pagan before coming Christian, and it would appear that the Falashas are derived from some elements who resisted conversion.

"In that case their so-called Judaism is merely the reflection of those Hebraic and Judaic practices and beliefs which were implanted on parts of south-west Arabia in the first post-Christian centuries and subsequently brought into Abyssinia. If this opinion is correct, then the religious pattern of the Falashas—even though it will have undergone some change in the past 1600 years—may well mirror to a considerable extent the religious syncretism of the pre-Christian Aksumite Kingdom. It is in their living testimony to the Judaized civilisation of the South Arabian immigrants and their well-nigh complete cultural ascendancy over the Cushitics and other strata of the original African population of Ethiopia that we must seek the value and great interest of the Falashas today—and not in their rehabilitation as a long lost tribe of Israel (which is historically quite unwarranted). Like their Christian fellow Ethiopians, the Falashas are stubborn adherents to formalised Hebraic-Jewish beliefs, practices, and customs, which were transplanted from South Arabia into the Horn of Africa."<sup>4</sup>

It should be observed that the Falasha, like the ruling Amhara and its monarchy, claim to be derived from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba through a hypothetical son named Menelek. They not only do not know the *Talmud* but they have no knowledge of the Babylonian captivity or of Jerusalem. They do not observe the feast of Purim nor the dedication of the Temple. It is constructive to an understanding of the origins to note that the Black Jews who are derived from Idumaeans of the Red Sea, and who now inhabit the Comoro Islands, have no knowledge of the prophets after the time of King David.<sup>5</sup>

It seems not unreasonable to assume that these so-called Jews, Falashas of Ethiopia and Black Jews of the Comoro Islands, as well as the Amhara themselves, derive their culture from a Hebrew tradition which belongs to an early period of Israel's history. Since the association of these three groups is with the Eed Sea and south-west Arabia, we can, therefore, say that this early Hebrew tradition represents the knowledge of people in south-west Asia at roughly the time of King David.

This is entirely consistent with the fact that we know David's son had trading posts in the Red Sea in connection with his overseas trade.

Therefore, it would seem that the Falashas of Ethiopia and the Black Jews of the Comoro Islands derive their cultural descent (even if they have largely bred out through miscegenation their Caucasoid genes) from Hebrew trading peoples in or about the region of Saba at the time of King Solomon, and Hiram King of Tyre. In the course of time, elements of this culture had



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

been absorbed by the Sabaeans, so that the invading Semitic Amhara brought into Ethiopia some elements of religion which they share in common with the Falashas which are of primitive Hebrew derivation, as well as other elements from pagan Arabian sources. When the Amhara became Christian, both these cultural traditions were absorbed into Coptic Ethiopian Christianity. Furthermore, when the Sabaeans turned from Christianity and adopted Judaism the probability is that it was a primitive and debased form of that religion analogous to what now survives among the Falashas and Black Jews of the Comoro Islands, rather than the more sophisticated religion associated with the Hebrews at the end of the pre-Christian Dispensation or with Jewry since.

These considerations are important for, as we shall show later, and as others have shown before us, there are traces of Judaism among Bantu of southern Africa. If it were derived from Sabaean sources, as we believe it was, it would be a debased Judaism and based largely on the Mosaic code and little else, with, as among the Falashas to this day, gods quite apart from the one God of Hebrew religion.

From these various pieces of evidence which we have reviewed, we may derive certain facts relevant to the study of the ethnology of Rhodesia with which we are concerned.

First of all we will see that the Semitic pagan Sabaeans were in the habit of settling overseas and became in due course absorbed into the native populations. Secondly that later immigrant Sabaeans brought a Judaic version of their paganism, and this has survived until the present time in the Falashas, and probably to a lesser degree in Ethiopian Christian thought and practice.

We think that we have here the same sequence of phenomena which we hope to show occurred in the case of the creation of the Zimbabwean civilisation in which, we believe, on what seems to be good warranty, the same Sabaean peoples were involved. The Ba-Lemba people, of Rhodesia and the Transvaal of today, are the equivalent in that setting of the Falashas of Ethiopia. The fundamental difference is merely one of degree of civilisation dictated by distance and the quality of the indigenous stocks among whom the Sabaeans settled. The further from the Yemen the less the Sabaean influence and the more primitive its form. Consequently, Great Zimbabwe, impressive as it is, cannot compare with the degree of civilisation enjoyed by Axsum. Secondly, the Sabaeans in Abyssinia were settling among Hamito-Cushite peoples who were much more advanced than the indigenous inhabitants of Rhodesia, who were Bush and Hottentot Cappoids, with later the admixture of Bantu. Therefore the resultant Judaized Lemba people's degree of civilisation is of a much lower order than that of the Falashas. Nevertheless *mutatis mutandis* we are dealing with the same phenomenon leading to the same results.

In their religion the Abyssinians have not only Cushitic elements (which were animistic combined with the veneration of the serpent) but also pagan Sabaean concepts which were based upon Athtar (Ashtar or Ishtar,

Venus), Almaqah (Sin, the moon-god) and Dhat Himyam (Shams, the sun-goddess).

We may therefore expect that wherever the Sabaeans settled, even when they were Judaized, some element of these pagan religions of Arabia would always be in evidence in some way or another.

The Falashas, therefore, provide a people who give us a key to the evolution of the religious beliefs of a people under Sabaean influence and a parallel to what we believe happened elsewhere down the coast of East Africa, wherever Ethiopians of Amhara extraction or Sabaeans settled.

Incidentally, while dealing with Abyssinia it is relevant to draw a parallel of an architectural nature between what has occurred in that country and what has been found in the Rhodesia of Zimbabwean times. This we think worthy of mention in passing. In Ethiopia, apart from the building of churches and royal edifices, until modern times there seems to have been little attempt at building for the masses of the people. Even at the height of their power the people still lived (as indeed they still very largely do) in thatched huts.<sup>6</sup> In this we have a close parallel to the situation which we find at Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Rhodesia. The objections, therefore, which some have made to the idea of non-Negroid and more advanced peoples having been responsible for the Zimbabwean civilisation because only the remains of hut circles have been found, fall to the ground. We must not expect more in Rhodesia than we find in Ethiopia.

1. **Thomas, Bertram** *Arabia Felix*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1932, p.23.
2. *Ibid.* Appendix 1, by Sir Arthur Keith and Wilton Marion Krogman, p.301.
3. **Ullendorff, Edward** *The Ethiopians*. London: Oxford University Press, 1960, p.110.
4. *Ibid.* p.111.
5. Ingrams, W. H. *Zanzibar*. London: Frank Cass, 1967, p.53.
6. **Ullendorff**, *The Ethiopians*. . . . ., p.174.

## CHAPTER

# 8

### The Parallel between Zimbabwe and Nubia in Relation to Foreign Cultural Influences

IT IS POSSIBLE to cite instances of a higher civilisation influencing materially a lower one through conquest, and the resultant settlement of some elements of the former among the people of the latter. As a result of this, oases of civilisation are created in parts of the world where the native population as a whole, outside those civilised or only semi-barbaric enclaves, remains primitive. In Africa we have a number of such cases, of which Ethiopia is one example. Equally outstanding as an example of this, is that of a relatively early date provided by the "X-Group" civilisation in Nubia, immediately south of Egypt. This civilisation reached a considerable degree of barbaric splendour at the beginning of the Christian era.

In the civilisation of Nubia of the early Christian centuries we find articles and goods of the greatest possible degree of art and beauty, which might be expected in a people of Egyptian-Nubian origin, but in a setting of human sacrifices. What is relevant to our purpose, however, is that articles have been found which have Egyptian, Roman, Greek, and even Scottish-Gaulish (Traprain Law), Rhenish, Asia Minor, Chinese, and other parallels.<sup>1</sup>

No one could possibly argue that this civilisation arose out of the African stock. In every way it shows the results of Egyptian influence, dating back to the time when the Pharaohs ruled over Nubia and the Sudan as far south as the Fourth Cataract of the Nile. Eventually from the crossing of the Caucasoid Egyptian rulers and administrative elements with the indigenous Nubians, who themselves were a mixture of Caucasoid, Australoid, and Negroid stocks,\* there was produced a Nubian people whose civilised attributes were Egyptian but whose barbaric traits were native. Through the Egyptian from the north came other influences from the Mediterranean and even the Indian Ocean and beyond. Ultimately Egyptian Christian influence becomes marked in the articles found in some of the tombs.

Just as our brief reference to Ethiopia has provided striking illustrations of the phenomena we find in megalithic Rhodesia and what has been derived from it, so here are further guides to our understanding of that civilisation.

\*This is what, we believe, gave rise, genetically, to the Cushites.

The parallel to Zimbabwe is close. We cannot believe that this Nubian civilisation was developed out of the culture of the indigenous Nubian people, any more than did the Zimbabwean develop from that of the native central African stock. The only real difference between those two centres of civilisation in Africa is that the Nubian is much more advanced—but this is explicable on the basis of its contiguity to Egypt and the higher civilising influences from more advanced peoples lying to Nubia's north, east, and south-east.

That racial mixture would take place in both cases is a foregone conclusion. Nubia lying next door to Egypt, and having once been a province of that Empire, still formed culturally in some very real respects a provincial variant of the Egyptian civilisation. In so far as that was so, it could withstand the gradual replacement of Egyptian racial hegemony by an indigenous Nubian much better than a remote cultural province could have done. Consequently, the dilution and decay of its civilisation would be slower. The fact is that it did decay for all that, once Egypt had been overrun and, for the time being, destroyed by barbarian Bedouin from the deserts.

It is not our purpose here to describe this Nubian civilisation or the less advanced Meroean to its south, of which it was a part, except to make the point that a relatively high civilisation can arise in the midst of barbarism, as we find to be the case both with this Nubian one, and the more remote Zimbabwean. But, in every case, it is due to intrusive elements both of a racial and cultural nature.

Incidentally it might be mentioned *en passant* that although the X-Group civilisation is a much higher one than the Zimbabwean (which is to be expected if the degree of fertilisation of a civilisation is related to closeness to centres of higher culture) there are certain features in common. For instance, the hawk-headed bird god symbol is to be found in Nubia on many of the articles discovered. In the case of a crown which consists of a circlet discovered in Nubia, the rim has on it the figures of a hawk-headed god Horus, much in the same way as the Zimbabwe bird was sited on the walls. The same hawk-headed god appears time and again in other connections also. This is an indication of how the falcon symbol was spreading southward from the Hamitic world at this time. Since bird symbols are to be associated also with the Semitic world before it became Moslem, it would be foolhardy to a degree to believe that the very distinctive Zimbabwe bird symbol was in origin indigenous to Rhodesia.

However the main point which we wish to make is that the civilisation of the Hamito-Semitic world from Egypt to Ethiopia, and inclusive of Arabia, was not static but dynamic at this time, and, from and through it, civilisations were arising in darkest Africa. Thus, a high and brilliant civilisation could exist in Nubia, a region pushing itself into the savage Sudan and towards uncivilised Negroid Africa, which drew upon cultures from far afield as well as much nearer Egypt.

Therefore when we find an extraordinary phenomenon such as Zimbabwe surrounded by regions hardly yet set upon the road of higher civilisation,

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

it is obvious in what direction we should turn for the explanation. This is not some outburst arising out of native barbarism, like a mutant gene in biology, which from something quite different produces an efflorescence pregnant with a leap forward to higher things. If we find a civilisation such as that of Zimbabwe buried in the jungle of barbarism, we must look for outside influences, just as we have seen was the case in Ethiopia and is here in Nubia.

In the one it was the settlement of Sabaeans of infinitely higher culture among more primitive Hamito-Cushitic people, which produced the higher civilization; in Nubia it was the influence of Caucasoid-Hamitic Egyptian, Libyan, and related peoples, who produced the same result in that culture, associated with the X-Group of peoples in Hamito-Cushitic Nubia. These instances could be multiplied but we have limited them to Ethiopia and Nubia because they are in Africa, and much nearer to Rhodesia than other examples which could be cited.

1. **Kirwan, L. P.** The X-Group Enigma, in: *Vanished Civilizations of the Ancient World*, ed. by: Edward Bacon. London: Thames and Hudson, 1963, p.55.

## CHAPTER

# 9

### A Criticism of the Theory that the Bantu created the Zimbabwean Civilisation

RANDALL-MACIVER who wrote in 1905 was the principal originator of the theory that the Bantu built Zimbabwe. He based his theory on suppositions which cannot be supported in the light of evidence.

He claimed that, apart from a few vague and ambiguous references, there was no documentary evidence upon the subject earlier than the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese records began. This is refuted by the early writers from the earliest times, whose works we have mentioned, down to the Portuguese records.

In any case, a lack of records would not prove that Zimbabwe had been built by the Bantu; neither would it prove that it could not have been created by more civilised peoples. Randall-Maciver alleged that:

"there can be no comparative scale for dating buildings or objects such as has been established for Egypt and the Mediterranean on the primary basis of inscriptions, checked, and guaranteed by their correspondence with literary histories".<sup>1</sup>

This is true, but irrelevant, as we have comparative dating from some artefacts and some near-absolute dating from carbon-14 tests. This is a very weak argument. We have complete information about the sequences of culture in many parts of the world without any supporting literary evidence. The whole of the prehistory of Northern Europe is in this case.

Randall-Maciver continues with a mis-statement when he says:

"It follows that there is only one means by which the antiquity of the Rhodesian remains can be gauged. This is by comparing them with those of other countries for which the dating is already independently established. But up to the present no material for such comparison has been obtained. For the style of the buildings by itself affords no criterion. It cannot be proved to owe anything to foreign influences. All characteristics of Oriental or European architecture are entirely absent."<sup>2</sup>

This is disproved by such evidence as the dry-stone wall buildings and temples of similar design, which we find from the pre-Christian era in Southern Arabia, as well as the relation of Rhodesian structures to other megalithic



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

buildings which we have had cause to deal with in this book. Even if we take such details of the stonework as the chevron, herring-bone, and cord patterns, found on the walls of the various Zimbabwean erections throughout Rhodesia, it will be found that they are common to the Arab and Mediterranean world. Furthermore, throughout the prehistoric and proto-historic archaeology of Europe and the Near East, we can point to corresponding hill-top sites with similar methods of walling to take advantage of natural defensive features. Indeed if we want a close parallel to the so-called Acropolis, we have no further to go than Dunadd, in Argyll, the capital of the Kingdom of Dalriada of the invading Hibernian Scots. This structure, dating from Iron Age times down to the historic period, shows the use of dry-stone dykes (walls) between the boulders, and the use of declivities between the rocks to allow access to the top of the fort, where the Scottish kings were invested in their sacred and royal offices. The Acropolis of Zimbabwe may be far distant in space from Argyll, but it belongs to the same megalithic tradition—and that tradition did not arise from the Bantu of Africa. Later we shall also show comparable buildings in the Yemen and south-east Arabia. Randall-Maciver deliberately refused to acknowledge the possibility of accepting objects which were found and which have known historic horizons. Having thus discarded, or pushed out of sight, the obvious evidence upon the basis of which he had the means of comparison, he then suggests that we have no alternative but to believe that these artefacts are of a comparatively recent origin.

We find him as saying:

"Unless therefore objects are discovered in the Rhodesian Ruins which are demonstrably foreign imports and known to belong to well-defined periods in the countries of their origin there can be no solution of the problem, and it is just because no such objects were found on the sites of Inyanga, the Niekerk Ruins and Umtali that I have refrained so far from expressing any definite opinion upon the date of the ruins of those three sites.

"If the periods of other ruins in the country can be satisfactorily ascertained, then it may be possible by establishing a relation between the different sites, to obtain an estimate of their relative periods. Yet at Dhlo Dhlo the required factor is found. There were found there unmistakable foreign articles, and of a well-known kind. For the present purpose it will be sufficient to mention one, and that is the *porcelain*. Many of the fragments of porcelain discovered in various parts of Dhlo Dhlo can be recognised at a glance. They are what is known as *Nankin china* a definitely medieval or even post medieval product—of a style known to be not earlier than the sixteenth century A.D."<sup>3</sup>

This leads him to say:

"Can there be any reasonable doubt after this that the date of Dhlo Dhlo is the date of this blue and white Nankin china, that is to say medieval or post medieval?"

Actually, this argument is a *non sequitur*. Unless the porcelain were found *in situ*, stratigraphically laid at the base of the structures, it does not prove that Dhlo Dhlo dates from the sixteenth century at all. This porcelain was found in rubbish heaps and under the floor of a dwelling which cannot be proved to have been contemporary with the building of Dhlo Dhlo itself. In all these structures we find the remains of floors of huts of late occupants of these towns.<sup>4\*</sup> Therefore it is later than the original structure, and was deposited there at a time when the Portuguese and others were bringing such foreign products to the east coast of Central Africa. Randall-Maciver's objection to the antiquity of the working of iron in Southern Africa collapses when we bear in mind that the Hottentots, who preceded the Bantu in Rhodesia, were acquainted with the art of smelting iron. Manufactured iron arrow and assegai heads have been found in abundance at Dhlo Dhlo and other sites, according to G. M. Theal.<sup>5</sup> Professor Dart<sup>6,x</sup> has shown the antiquity of iron ore mining in southern Africa, which shows that such early iron tool-makers as the Hottentots had ready access to the necessary ores long before the Bantu entered southern Africa.

Randall-Maciver's conjecture is equally weak when he asserts that shapes of tools and weapons, and the decoration of pottery, are valueless as evidence. Typology is one of the most important tools of the prehistorian. Randall-Maciver obviously evades the fact which was demonstrated by the excavations at Zimbabwe, that styles, designs, and decorative patterns have changed since the earliest period of construction of these buildings. The difference between the earliest 'stamped ware' found at Zimbabwe and the later pottery relics, was noted by the archaeologists, as was also the difference between the superior early Siwa pottery found at Inyanga, and the later products.

The fact that iron-mining tools, some of which are on display in the Bulawayo Museum, have names of Persian origin should have been a sufficient indication that to ascribe all the iron tools found in these excavations to Bantu origins was foolhardy to say the least. Furthermore, there were clearly skilled goldsmiths in this civilisation. They produced fine gold-plating, ornaments, gold wire, and solid gold tacks. There has been discovered a rod of office six to eight inches long, having a head of beaten gold embossed with the sun image, and possessing a solid gold ferrule. This was found by Mr. R. N. Hall<sup>7</sup> in the graves of tall people who were not buried in

\*In his reply to Randall-Maciver Mr. R. N. Hall says:—"The earliest of all objects obtained from Zimbabwe' this expression as applied by Professor Maciver to certain finds mentioned by him on page 80. 'Mediaeval Rhodesia' is absolutely without the slightest warrant whatever—as stated earlier Nankin china can only be found in the 'midden debris' of subsequent squatters within the temple, and at heights of *some* feet above the original floors and the choked up drains, and possibly on the floors of such structures of obviously decadent native type which are of a relatively late date for instance Renders Ruins." R. N. Hall went on to say that the Nankin china would be found very near the surface at Zimbabwe, indicating comparatively recent origin, and when he showed his native workers some fragments of Nankin china, they at once took him to an area within the ruins where after digging below the grass at a depth of only six inches, they produced many such fragments, which they said they used to remove hair from their skins. Thus much for the dating method employed by Randall-Maciver. (Hall, R. N., *Prehistoric Rhodesia*. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1909, p.203.)

x However, while relying on Professor Dart's evidence that the use of iron in South Africa is pre-Bantu, it is not necessary to accept his view that iron was worked in Cappoid Southern Africa before it was in its main centres of distribution in the near East!

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

the flexed position common to the Bantu. In the grave of a man nearly seven feet tall in the Chum Ruin Mine in the Gwanda district, gold ornaments to the value of approximately \$2,000 were found.

Since such profuse metal-working is not common among the Bantu, and since the skeletons are of a type not to be associated with them, and bearing in mind that the bodies were not flexed, there is sufficient evidence to indicate a non-Bantu origin. If non-Bantu, it was pre-Bantu. It is a valid criticism of Randall-Maciver that evidence based upon Hall's discoveries were ignored by him. He was, therefore, able only to make deductions from quite incomplete evidence.

It should be observed that Mapungubwe is an analogous site in the Transvaal, and at Bambandyanalo on the Limpopo excavations took place in 1935. At these places skeletons were found. These have been reported upon by Captain Gardiner and Professor R. Dart. The latter, concerning Bambandyanalo, says it has a Zimbabwe to pre-Zimbabwe stratification, and that this is the first site with an adequate number of skeletons. He says from this that one can conclude that the population of the Zimbabwe culture was Boskop-Bush in type and Hottentot in culture. Dr. Galloway, after examining these skeletons, stated emphatically that there was not a single specifically Negro skull in any of those recovered from the K2 level. This indicates that up to about 1200 A.D. the people of a civilisation of the same horizon as that of Zimbabwe were not Negroid Bantu. According to Professor R. A. Dart the Bantu did not appear in any numbers in Southern Africa till the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D.<sup>8</sup>

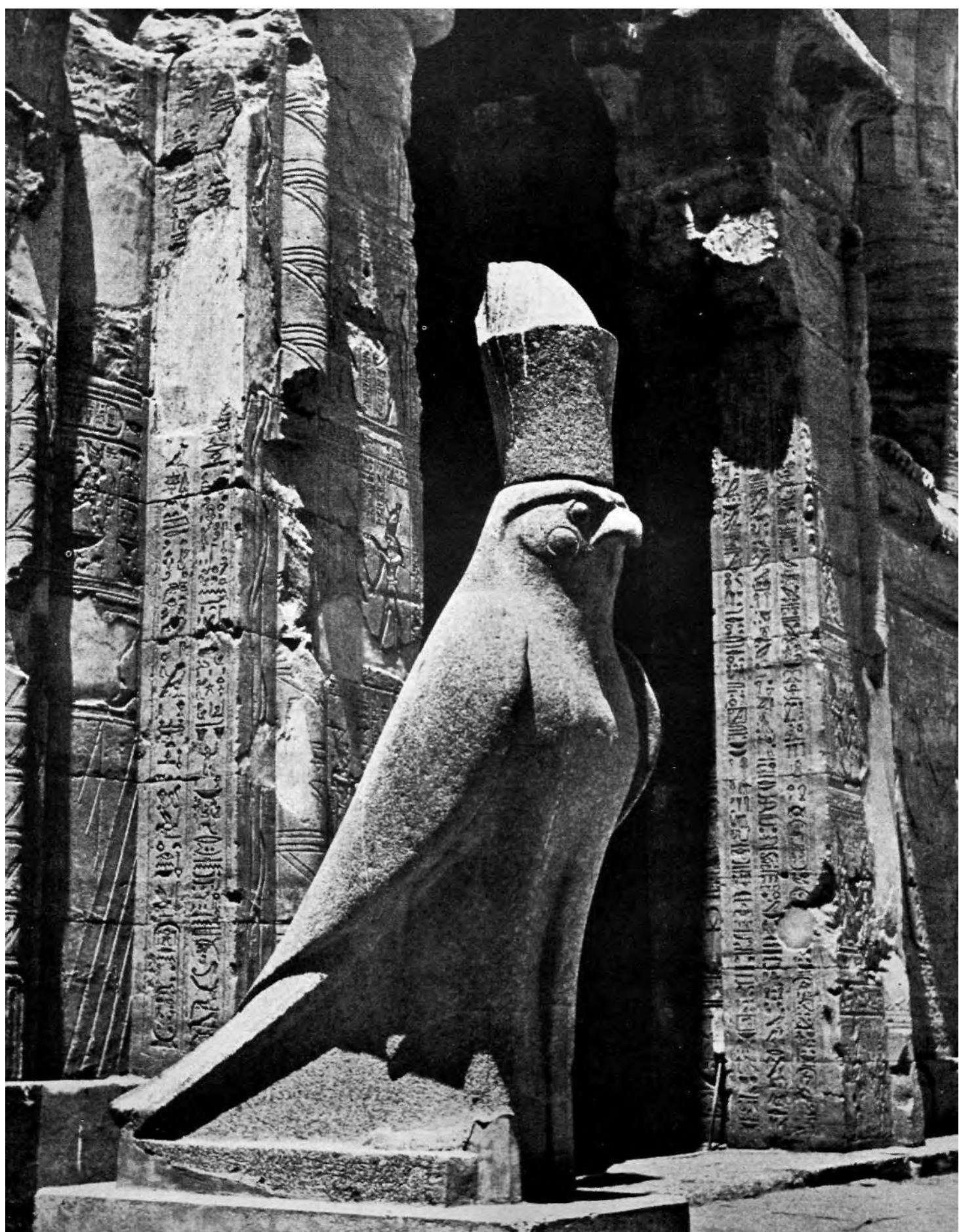
It is only after this date that we are dealing with Bantu who, apparently, overthrew and destroyed the civilisation of which Hottentot peoples were typical in the community.

Scientists have now produced evidence to relate the gold ornaments and the builders of Zimbabwe with an era well before the advent of the Bantu, an event which took place much later than adherents of the Bantu theory care to admit. Professor Dart's examination of the skeletal material from Mapungubwe in the Limpopo Valley and Professor Galloway's investigation of the nearby Bambandyanalo site, confirmed that the Negro Bantu invaders did not arrive in that area until about the thirteenth century A.D. As it would be quite uncharacteristic of the nomadic Bantu to remain in Rhodesia for a very long period without venturing over the Limpopo, it is unlikely that they reached Rhodesia in any great numbers much before the second millenium of the Christian era. This assumption is supported by the pottery of non-Bantu origin which was found at the very lowest levels of the Zimbabwe excavations.

In the conclusion to his Rhodesian investigations, Randall-Maciver remarks that:

"seven sites have been investigated and from not one of them has any object been obtained by myself or others before me which can be shown to be more ancient than the fourteenth or fifteenth century A.D."

Right: A statue of the sacred Falcon of Horus at a temple built at Edfu by the Ptolemaic Kings.  
Inside, left: A stele of Djer, third King of the First Dynasty, also known as King Serpent, found at Abydos. Inside, right: Soapstone bird stele, at Zimbabwe, showing sun disk and chevron patterns, and crocodile on the left.

















This statement is entirely untrue so far as predecessors are concerned. It does not surprise us so far as it concerns his own investigations, upon which he spent five months only in Rhodesia. In so complex a subject it is unlikely that he could have in any way become an expert on the subject on which he was writing. It is clear that far too much weight has been given to the opinions of an archaeologist whose experience was strictly limited and who ignored all the evidence that existed against the theory which he had formed.

Bent<sup>9</sup> had found what appeared to be an Egyptian ingot mould, and Posselt discovered what is thought had similarities to a Phoenician rosette cylinder. Neither of these could be dismissed without weighty arguments against such identifications. Likewise, Randall-Maciver was subsequently proved wrong, when Miss Caton-Thompson found beads of Indian manufacture of the eighth century A.D. in the lower levels of the excavation.

We have already shown that Randall-Maciver's objection that not a single inscription has ever been found in the country is completely irrelevant. The mere absence of literary evidence is a negative factor. It does not disprove that the builders had the use of letters.

However, it is on record that a Lt. Col. A. L. da Costa found in a southern African ruin a quantity of Egyptian papyri. There is now no trace of the papyri but the discovery is recorded.<sup>10</sup> Whether they were Egyptian papyri one cannot tell. But this indicates that there is the possibility that literary evidence has existed, and might still exist, belonging to some civilisation earlier than that in southern Africa and preceding that of the non-literate Bantu also.<sup>11\*</sup>

Randall-Maciver in the formulating of his theories lists three conclusions:<sup>12</sup>

1. "That imported articles of which the date is well-known in the country of origin, are contemporary with Rhodesian buildings in which they are found, and that these buildings are therefore mediaeval and post mediaeval."

This argument is fallacious. We are dealing with pre-mediaeval structures which lasted on into the mediaeval period.

2. "That the character of the dwellings contained within the stone ruins and forming an integral part of them, is unmistakably African."

This can be challenged. There was a native work force, the remains of whose dwellings must obviously survive. But this does not prove that the civilisation is derived from them. Furthermore, the Hamites and Semites and many other indigenous people of the period, except the Bushmen, lived in the same way. We have already drawn attention to the fact that in Ethiopia the people lived in huts while public buildings were of stone. Therefore, remains of

\*Incidentally, the loss of these writings is not the only one which is to be deplored. The marble rosette cylinder which might provide evidence of a link with Phoenicia, through a small rosette cylinder found at Zimbabwe, has also disappeared (so we are informed) from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, where Theodore Bent first saw this cylinder, which was stated to have come from Paphos.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

huts do not prove a Bantu origin. It is clear that Randall-Maciver did not differentiate between Bantu and non-Bantu natives, and he finds a refuge in describing them all as Africans. In this connection it is of interest to note that the Arab Sheik or Sultan in possession of Sofala when the Portuguese arrived, lived in nothing more than a large mud hut (of pole and dagga) with a thatched roof.\*

3. ". . . that the arts and manufactures exemplified by objects found within these dwellings are typically African, except when the objects are imports of well-known mediaeval or post mediaeval date."

This does not differentiate between African peoples, Negroes (Bantu), Semites, and Hamitic Cushites. His restricted experience (of five months only) did not qualify him for making *obiter dicta*. His evidence of mediaeval artefacts did not preclude the possibility of other artefacts of an earlier period, which had not come within his purview and experience.

Randall-Maciver's estimate that the importance of Zimbabwe was centred around the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D. has now been proved wrong by a thousand years. Half a century later than Randall-Maciver's theorising, a radio-carbon-dating test proved that Zimbabwe was from 1300 to 1500 years old, in other words belonging to 400 to 600 A.D., or thereabout. Yet it was on his inadequate theorising that the idea that the Bantu built Zimbabwe was erected. That argument is still carried on by those who have conceded that the building may have been started earlier, perhaps 900 A.D. In order to bolster their theory, they have to bring the Bantu into Rhodesia earlier than has been established, so that they can maintain that Zimbabwe and similar towns were built by them.

Miss Caton-Thompson was strongly influenced towards a late dating by the presence of Chinese pottery and similar dateable artefacts. This is in sharp contrast to her conclusions when faced with somewhat similar phenomena in her work in South Arabia as reported by R. Le Baron Bowen and Frank Albright.<sup>13</sup> They record that the irrigation and associated ruins, which were excavated and were dateable to the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., had, at all the sites she examined, fifteenth century Chinese and Persian ceramic wares and ninth and tenth century Islamic fragments. In other words, although she found identical types of phenomena in Rhodesia

\*Randall-Maciver and, generally speaking, most of the pro-Bantu school of propagandists, tend to use the term African for the building of Zimbabwe. This is a less than honest usage by allegedly scientific people, unless they use the word correctly for an African people who might range from White in the north to Black in Central Africa and dark brown in southern Africa. For they must know that this leaves the firm impression to the mind of the layman of black peoples or Negroes. In the context in which they often write, it is the clear intention to infer that Bantu are intended, but because of the looseness of the term they can always shift their ground when disproved at any point, by saying that they did not use the term Bantu, but African. "African" should have no place in any discussion of the ethnology of Africa. Since we claim that the intention is to infer Bantu by the use of African, we intend to stick to that interpretation until they come forward and tell us what Africans other than Bantu they mean.

The thesis which we are putting forward in this book, and which we believe is supported by all the facts, is that there were non-African and north African influences at work from the earliest times; that ultimately some of these conceived and designed the Zimbabwean civilization. In doing this they used slave labour, which was first of all Cappoid, Bushman and later Hottentot, to which was added Bantu slave elements brought down the coast and analogous to the later Swahili-Moslems, and finally less acculturated Bantu coming from the north into Rhodesia.

Therefore, the discovery of any of these elements in the cities of the Zimbabwean civilization, does not support an "African" origin for the structures we now find, and certainly does not establish a Bantu inspiration for them. (*Mediaeval Rhodesia*. London: Macmillan, 1906, p.83.)

she dated the buildings by these, but in Southern Arabia she was not influenced by them to post-date those monuments by a millennium or more. Apart from Dr. Randall-Maciver's and Miss Caton-Thompson's views being invalidated by the evidence which we are covering in this book, this example of lack of consistent method rules out any reliance on Miss Caton-Thompson's conclusions.

1. **Kirwan, L. P.** The X-Group Enigma, in: *Vanished Civilizations of the Ancient World*,
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.* p.47.
4. **Hall, R. N.** *Prehistoric Rhodesia*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1909, p.203.
5. **Theal, G. M.** *The Beginnings of South African History*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902.
6. **Dart, R. A.** Bloodstone and its Revolutions. *The New Archaeological Magazine*, AGO, Bournemouth, England, No. 1, May, 1970, p.7, and No. 2, June, 1970. p.8.
7. **Hall, R. N. and Neal, W. G.** *The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia*. London: Methuen, 1902, p.95.
8. **Dart, R. A.** Foreign Influences of the Zimbabwe and pre-Zimbabwe Eras, *Nada*, Salisbury, Rhodesia: Native Affairs Department, 1955.
9. **Bent, J. T.** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green. 1896, p.219.
10. **Paver, B. G.** *Zimbabwe Cavalcade*. Johannesburg: Central News Agency of South Africa, 1950, p.56, quoting, Dr. Churchward, *Signs and Symbols of Primordial Man*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1923.
11. **Bent, J. T.** *The Ruined Cities*. . . . . , p.202.
12. **Maciver, D. Randall-** *Mediaeval Rhodesia*. . . . . , p.83.
13. **Bowen, R. Le B. and Albright, F.** *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1938, vol. 2, p.78.

## CHAPTER

# 10

The Age of  
the Zimbabwe Ruins  
and its Bearing  
upon the People  
who erected them

IN OUR PAPER on this subject<sup>1</sup> we contested the whole concept of the pro-Bantu theorists for the late building of Zimbabwe. That paper's purpose was to accept as many premises of that school as possible, and then show that, even so, its claims were so inconsistent and so often contrary to known facts that they were not justified. The clear evidence from such an approach, which was even prepared, for the sake of argument, to accept some of that school's premises, was that Zimbabwe was built much earlier than it claimed.

In this book we do not propose to follow exactly that line of reasoning, and so to take later rather than earlier alternative datings for the erection of these buildings, but to conform rather to those dates which appear to be most consistent with all the facts. In so far as we interpret the ethnological history of the Zimbabwean civilisation, this shift of emphasis from an alternative dating in certain phases makes no material difference. There has, therefore, been no repudiation of the earlier interpretations which have been given already.

We think it is important to point out that the earlier interpretation to which we have referred, (which attempted to argue from premises which conformed as much as possible to those of the pro-Bantuists), nevertheless entirely destroyed the basis of the argument for a Bantu origin. The fact that it has passed unanswered seems clear enough evidence that there is no answer to it. This fact alone justifies us in making no attempt to concede any points in order to show that even with those concessions the Bantu theory is indefensible. Here our purpose is to establish as precisely as possible what are the facts and sequences of the civilisation with which we are dealing.

In disposing of the early theories which associate Zimbabwe with the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon, and the Phoenicians, we think it is only fair to say that these are not myths without some foundation. The evidence we have covered for an early exploitation of the mineral resources of the coastlands of East and Central Africa is too strong to be treated with the contempt with which it is usually dismissed.

There can be little doubt that explorers and venturers were arriving from a very early date, and certainly from anything between the end of the

second millennium B.C. to the middle of the first; that is, from the time of Hiram King of Tyre, Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba, to that of the Pharoah Necho II. How far these explorers penetrated inland by the Zambezi, Sabi, and Limpopo rivers is another matter. Gold is found in Mozambique and alluvial gold must have been plentiful in all the rivers at an early period. Near the mouths of the rivers, where the rate of flow slows down, and places where alluvial muds and sands accumulate, must have been very rich in gold deposits. Therefore, we regard these earlier contacts of civilised peoples to have been rather with the coasts of East and Central Africa than inland regions, since there was no point in going into the interior to mine gold when there was plenty to be panned near the coasts.

For that reason, apart from those of scientific dating, we believe that Dr. A. J. Bruwer's<sup>2</sup> advocacy for a Phoenician origin for the existing ruins is mistaken. The parallels which he draws between the Zimbabwean structures and those of Phoenicia and Carthage are significant, but do not establish his thesis.

What Dr. Bruwer is describing in these various important structures and artefacts is largely a late megalithic survival of the Mediterranean civilisation which was common to a much greater area, comprehending southern Arabia and Ethiopia. His parallels, therefore, could apply to many cultural motifs from Malta or Sardinia to the Yemen and Axsum in Ethiopia. It should be remembered that the Etruscans were building copies of the Sardinian megalithic Nuraghi until as late as the voyages instigated by Pharoah Necho II. Consequently, if megalithic structures were being built in lands closely associated with the metropolitan civilisations of the ancient world, the techniques associated with such structures might have lasted on much longer further afield, whether in the broch megalithic forts or places of refuge of Scotland's northern isles, or in similar techniques employed in Ethiopia and the Yemen at the other extension of the megalithic civilisation.

Therefore, it is not established on the parallels which he demonstrates that the Zimbabwean complex is Phoenician at all. What he has proved (and that without any question) is that Zimbabwe is a part of a civilisation which had megalithic roots, of which Phoenicia and Carthage were also heirs. In Malta we have perfect terracing which could be compared with that of Inyanga. This does not prove that these in Rhodesia are Maltese in origin. All that is proved is that they are part of the same civilisation (using that term in its broadest connotation).

Dr. Bruwer's book is a valuable contribution to our study if it is interpreted within these limits. His parallels prove that this civilisation of Central Africa belongs to one of which the Mediterranean basin was also, at an early period in time, an heir. It does not prove that the remains we now see at Zimbabwe, Khami, Naletale and Dhlo Dhlo were erected by Phoenicians or any peoples before our era.

In stating this we do not wish to say that Phoenicians or other early venturers could not have reached Rhodesia and worked its surface deposits of gold. It is always possible that some of them, working their way up the

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

rivers as they panned the gold, did so. On the other hand, we think it unlikely, while rich alluvial gold could be recovered near the coast, that they actually mined the gold further inland by sinking shafts to any extent.

Any artefacts which are claimed to be Phoenician, or even of an earlier people, which may be identified at Zimbabwe or elsewhere in the same civilisation, can be explained either as articles which gradually came from the coast and were actually antiques by the time they reached Rhodesia or, which is more likely to be the case, as articles made in the same traditional form.

It is unlikely that there were any extensive settlements of civilised men in Rhodesia much before the Christian era. If settlements occurred they must have been of a very primitive frontier character. Since at that time there were only Bushmen and Hottentots in the land, no great stone structures were needed for defensive purposes. Therefore, before the arrival of the Bantu, stone buildings, except for small shrines where tradition dictated stone building, would be unlikely to arise. Since the very earliest date that Bantu began to move south from the Great Lakes was about the sixth century A.D.\*<sup>3</sup>, it follows that they could not have crossed the Zambezi until very much later. Perhaps the pressure then set up in Tanganyika and Zambia, which would reflect itself in pushing Hottentots and Bushmen southwards across the Zambezi, might have been felt in Rhodesia by the seventh century A.D. This might have been a factor which made this the period when these stone-walled cities first began to arise. That there was no need for extensive defensive stonework before the seventh century A.D. seems fairly evident. That this conclusion is correct is established by the carbon-14 tests on two pieces of timber taken from the structure of Zimbabwe.

In order to escape from the conclusive carbon-14 evidence, those among the later archaeologists who have constituted themselves the exponents of the pro-Bantu school have been forced to ludicrous shifts to explain the evidence away. They postulate that pieces of timber lay about the Rhodesian veld for centuries before being taken as building material! Apart from knowing nothing of the needs of builders for whom old, as distinct from seasoned, wood is of no use, and the fact that the forces of nature would have destroyed it by means of fires or insects, the whole of this is special pleading verging on dishonesty. The carbon-14 evidence so destroys the theorists that its testimony must be explained away. We know of no similar case in archaeology where such clear scientific evidence has been set aside in order to suit an entirely unfounded theory. We propose to ignore completely such specious pleadings, and take the evidence in the way it would normally be accepted in science.

We therefore, come to the incontrovertible fact that in the building of the structure of the "Temple" at Zimbabwe two pieces of timber of tambooti

\*Professor G. P. Murdock says that the Bantu reached the north-east African coast from the interior between 575 and 879 A.D. Since the Bantu in Southern Africa came down from the north, as part of this general movement of expansion, it is clear that they could not have arrived in any large numbers before the sixth to the ninth centuries. (*Africa; its people and their culture history*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.307.)



wood were employed. They must be assumed to be contemporaneous with the building of the stonework in which they were embedded. The carbon-14 tests give for these two pieces of timber dates of 590 and 702 A.D. respectively.

If the wood had been seasoned for 25 years first we can take dates of say 615 A.D. and 727 A.D. for the buildings of which they were a part. There is with carbon-14 dating a margin of error which is usually about 100 years. Since this would open up the possibility of putting the earlier piece as late as 715 A.D. and the later piece as early as 627 A.D., we can see there is a complete overlap. We are, therefore, justified in taking the average date between 615 A.D. and 727 A.D., which gives us 671 A.D. as the approximate date for the erections of which they were a part, with a possible  $\pm 100$  years. Consequently if we conclude that the building work started about 571 A.D. at the earliest we will not be far out,\*<sup>4</sup> and we can assume that it was in full activity at the latest about 771 A.D. This gives a period of about 200 years within which Zimbabwe was started and reached a considerable degree of maturity—although this later date is not that at which the whole structure as we now see it was necessarily completed.

This timber was taken from that part of Zimbabwe where the quality of stone and craftsmanship is of the best. It would seem that we are, because of this, forced to conclude that the seventh century A.D. is about the central point in time when the most advanced and skilled builders were at work. Basing his estimates on W. T. Libby,<sup>5</sup> Professor R. A. Dart<sup>6</sup> gives terminal dates of 377 A.D. and 941 A.D. when the wall could have been built. The average of these dates is 659 A.D. which brings us back to a seventh century dating as probably correct, with a latitude of a century one way or the other. Therefore the building of the walls of Zimbabwe must be between the sixth and the eighth century A.D.—getting on for a thousand years before the guesswork of Randall-Maciver.

We have important corroborative evidence of the correctness of these datings from the significant finds made at Karoi,<sup>7</sup> despite what we believe to be Mr. Peter Garlake's complete misinterpretation of the evidence to fit the Bantu-origin thesis. These finds are of a people with fine pottery, gold, and ivory ornaments, who are buried thirty miles downstream from Kariba. Garlake admits that the method of burial is not "African" or European—though one wonders why he should mention the latter, as no one would suppose it would be! The post was evidently a rich trading one, and it shows, in the artefacts found, trading tentacles (as the report puts it) stretching as far as India. But Mr. Garlake has to call them a trading "tribe", dating them A.D. 680 to A.D. 800-900, who were probably of the Makorekore tribe of the Mashona, who were predecessors of the Zimbabwe people!

Here we have a whole jumble of unproven, and in some cases disproved, assumptions, all designed to maintain the myth of Bantu origins. The inhabitants do not bury in an "African" way, which in this context must mean

\*A reasonable dating of A.D. 575 may thus be accepted for the early phases of this building (*Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*. London: Warne, 1965, p.23.)



The exterior of a drain in the main wall, the Temple, Zimbabwe.

Bantu, yet he makes them Bantu Makorekore Mashona. There is no evidence that the Bantu had settled in large numbers in Rhodesia at this time, but he can still call these people Bantu. There is no evidence that any Bantu carried on active trade with foreign parts, but these Karoi Ingombe Ilede people do. Finally, to make them and their race the founders of Zimbabwe, he has to classify them as predecessors of their kind at Zimbabwe.

The fact of the matter is, putting aside all these illogicalities as invalidating this worthless interpretation (which is palpably designed to make facts fit a theory which is bankrupt of any sound scientific value), we have in the dating of these people a further corroboration of the dating of Zimbabwe at which strictly scientific evidence has arrived. For it is clear that in the seventh century A.D. there was active trade taking place with the coast and overseas, by people who were rich in gold and ivory, and did not bury in the "African", that is Bantu, manner. This is consistent with similar and more metropolitan developments occurring at such places as Zimbabwe, where the numbers, power, and prosperity of the inhabitants at this time, allowed the walls to be erected.

This definite settlement of the dating, which all these facts indicate, is important because it has a direct bearing on who were the builders. It enables us to eliminate the Bantu who had not as yet crossed the Zambezi at this time. Any stray Negroids can be explained, as has been pointed out elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> by the possibility of scattered and small settlements having been established from the Congo to the coast in the Zambezi Valley. But such Negroids were not occupants of the land, which at this time was in the hands of the Cappoid Bushmen and Hottentots. The settlement of scattered Negroids in the wet and swampy riverine lands of the Zambezi would have been of no interest to hunters and pastoralists, to whom they constituted no threat. Secondly, any other Negroid elements, which might have been involved, could have been the first flush brought down the coast from the north by Arab traders. But what the Negroes were not was free, dominant, and ruling owners of the land of Rhodesia at that time. Therefore, the erection of Zimbabwe, as established by carbon-14 dating, is prior to the large-scale arrival of the Negroid Bantu in Rhodesia.

As Mr. James E. Mullan<sup>9</sup> has observed, since the Bantu have not left behind, in the lands to the north from whence they came, any evidence of the skill demonstrated in Zimbabwe, one must conclude that they would have to be given a reasonable lapse of time in which to develop the necessary craftsmanship, from quarrying the granite slabs, trimming and shaping them, to erecting a structure requiring great technical skill. Several centuries of industrial evolution would be required to achieve that standard of excellence before such a structure, as we now see it, could have arisen. The Anglo-Saxons were in a much more advanced technological state when they landed in England, and they had the examples of Romano-British cities to copy. Nevertheless, it took several centuries before they were building in stone edifices worthy of the name. Therefore it would be necessary to bring the Bantu across the Zambezi in big numbers at the latest in the second or third

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

centuries A.D., for them to have been able to build megalithic structures of this kind by the seventh century A.D. In fact the earliest date by which the incoming hordes of conquering Bantu arrived in Rhodesia is thought to have been about the tenth to the twelfth centuries A.D. This was some centuries after they had begun their migration southwards from the Great Lakes. Dr. Caton-Thompson, however, placed their arrival earlier, at about the ninth century. This is based on archaeological data alone and can be nothing more than an approximation.

Even so, should so early a date as the ninth century be proved correct for the arrival of the Bantu, it could not be until the twelfth or later centuries that they would have achieved the skill to build Great Zimbabwe. Consequently the ninth century date is at least four or five hundred years too late, in the face of the strict discipline of the carbon-14 tests which narrows speculation to within about a century of possible error.

Therefore, it is incontrovertible that the evidence provided by carbon-14 dating is conclusive. Great Zimbabwe was in the course of being built in the seventh century A.D. That being so, in having been able to establish a fixed date from conclusive scientific evidence, we are able to say with strong justification that it was being built centuries before the Bantu arrived. There may, however, still be doubt about who built it, but we know who did not—and those who did not build it were the Bantu.

The date at which we have arrived will help us to ascertain who or what elements were involved in Zimbabwe's construction. This dating eliminates the Phoenician, Egyptian, Solomon, and Queen of Sheba, theories as effectively as it does that of the Bantu. However, as we have already made evident, we do not deny the possibility of these ancient civilisations and their venturers having made contact with Mozambique and even further inland. The discovery of artefacts belonging to these ancient peoples would not invalidate our conclusion in this matter. We are not in this connection concerned with *contact* between the ancient world and Rhodesia and Mozambique (the evidence for which we have already given) but with the people who were actually involved in permanent settlement and, ultimately, in building Great Zimbabwe, which was an event which occurred in the seventh century of our era.

The dating at which we have arrived of the seventh century for the active building stage, assists us to narrow the field still further. Mr. Mullan<sup>10</sup> takes the view that the building was between 700 and 850 A.D. (whereas we have indicated that the probability is that it was a century or a century and a half earlier) and then proceeds to conclude:

"we submit unhesitatingly that the only possible builders were the refugee Arabs—the followers of Suleiman and Said, together with the followers of Zaid—the Umma Zaidiya, known later as the Emozuids."

Suleiman and Said had settled on the East African coast about 648 A.D., and Zaid, the leader of the Emozuid Moslems was killed in East Africa in 739 A.D. Since it would take some time for these Moslem Arabs to increase

in numbers and arrive in Rhodesia, it does not seem that 735 to 790 A.D. would be too late for their operations in huge building works to commence. In other words, the eighth century would be the earliest date which could be given for Zimbabwe if it were the work of these Moslem Arabs. Indeed we think it would have to be the ninth century rather than the eighth. On the basis of the dating at which we have arrived, it seems fairly evident that these dates are one to two centuries too late to be reconciled with the carbon-14 dating.

Therefore, we believe that these Islamic Arabs are ruled out, as the founders of the Zimbabwean civilisation. The fact that no mosque is ever found in any or the ruins\* of the Rhodesian megalithic civilisations is in very strong support of these conclusions.

Since it is inconceivable that the Bushmen and Hottentots built these structures, we are left with a very much narrower field of enquiry. The only candidates are a people probably arriving in the sixth century who were strong and powerful enough to build these great works in the seventh century. Therefore, it is quite clear that they were pre-Islamic in date and culture. We shall proceed later to show whence they came.

Thus far we have concerned ourselves with dating as it can be established from the "Temple" at Great Zimbabwe. On high crags above this town, which undoubtedly has elements of a religious nature to justify the term Temple, stands the "Acropolis". Here excavations were carried out by Messrs. K. R. Robinson and R. Summers in 1958. They found charcoal from the hearths of the early inhabitants, from which they obtained carbon-14 datings. They concluded that on the hill, where they say the earlier levels are older than those in the town below, there were five periods of occupation: the first period ended and the second began in the fourth century A.D., while the third period—when, according to *them*, the stone walls were built—began about 1100<sup>11</sup>. We can ignore their equation of the third period, when the walls of the "Temple" were built, with a date of 1100 A.D., as this is manifestly incorrect from the carbon-14 dating which we have examined already.

The point which can be accepted is that the dating of the early period, before the building of the walls (which are to be equated with the building of the "Temple"), is around or earlier than the fourth century A.D. In that case the period which they say coincides with the building of the "Temple" would be consistent with the carbon-14 dating of the seventh century. This invalidates the wholly arbitrary dating of 1100 A.D. The date of the fourth century for the Acropolis is so early that it absolutely rules out the Bantu, on the one hand, and *Moslem* Arabs, on the other, as the peoples responsible for this site which is obviously intimately associated with Great Zimbabwe.

We are, therefore, left with a consistent evolutionary sequence which amounts first of all to some weak settlements, leading in time (coincident with a population explosion of some sort) to the building and sustaining of

\*A point made strongly to the writer (Gayre) by Mr. Kirkman in a discussion at the Fort Jesus Museum, Mombasa, Kenya, of which he is the Curator.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

the great megalithic monuments we now know, consisting of a strong town and "Temple" complex, supported by a stone fortress ("Acropolis") structure on the crags overlooking it.

We have, therefore, a period of population growth from the beginning of the Christian era until the seventh century, when the great stone buildings were being erected. Since, as is evident, this Zimbabwean civilisation was connected with the mineral resources of Rhodesia and Mozambique, it follows that there was a constant flow of minerals to the coast and a movement of men. That being so, immigration must have been taking place all the time, as has always been the characteristic of goldfields everywhere.

Therefore, the growth from the weak settlements of the early Christian centuries until the great works were being erected in the seventh century, must be accounted for on the basis not only of natural increase of the original population, but by additions, and probably considerable additions, from immigration.

In so far as this is evident it supports the views of the ancient school, of which Dr. Bruwer is the latest exponent, who look to ancient pre-Christian "Phoenician" or similar origins. For it is clear that some sort of settlements existed from an early period prior to the erection of the great urban conurbations which began to be built from about the seventh century A.D. onwards. To that degree is the early school for the Zimbabwean civilisation on firm ground, even if one has to reject, on the carbon-14 dating, the early period to which they would assign these megalithic structures.

We have thus far limited our discussion to Great Zimbabwe itself, partly because this is the site on which most work and speculation in Rhodesia has been centred. However, it must not be considered in isolation from other sites, and particularly from that of Mapungubwe on the Limpopo, in the Transvaal in South Africa.

Whichever theory is right, whether this civilisation is due to ancients ("Phoenicians"), pre-Islamic or Islamic Arabs, or the Bantu coming down from the north, it is clear that any similar site in the Transvaal must be later, and probably a good deal later, than Great Zimbabwe in the Fort Victoria region of Rhodesia. The tide of movement, whatever it was, flowed from north to south.

Mapungubwe has a carbon-14 dating of  $1058 \pm 65$  years. This gives us a date of the tenth to eleventh century, and so about three hundred years after that of Zimbabwe. This is consistent with our reasoning. For it is obvious that no such works are going to be built until the gold exploitation has grown great enough to merit a large population, which in its turn demands a town, sometimes a temple complex, and defensive structures.

It will be noted that the theories of Messrs. Robinson and Summers equated the building of the walls of Zimbabwe with 1100 A.D. This is so inconsistent with the reasoning set out above that it amounts to an absurdity. Unless the tide of exploitation of gold flowed from south to north, which no one has asserted, then Mapungubwe could not precede or be contemporaneous with the building of megalithic Zimbabwe.



We have in the Mapungubwe site a clear vindication of our contention that the Bantu were later arrivals, after the Zimbabwean civilisation had been created by other people. Captain Gardiner<sup>12</sup> found only skeletons of a Hottentot type in the first phase at a K.2 level, for which a date up to about 1000 A.D. has been assigned. In the second phase at K.2, of a date between 1100 and 1250 A.D., an intermixture of Bantu with Hottentot occurs. This is the first appearance there of the Negroid type. We see no reason to change our view that the incoming of the Bantu type was merely due to a Negroid addition to the slave labour force.<sup>13</sup>

The sites in the Transvaal, of which a principal one is Mapungubwe, clearly illustrate the existence of a Hottentot-like population preceding a Bantu. When the Reverend Neville Jones and Mr. Schofield, two archaeologists who worked on the Mapungubwe site, suggested that the people of this place were of 'Shona' stock, Dr. Galloway, a competent physical anthropologist, gave them a devastating answer. He said:

"If the Mapungubwe skulls represent the antecedents of Setho-Shona people, then, to allow for this amazing biological change, the Negro must have entered South Africa and settled at Mapungubwe at least six thousand years ago—which is absurd."

Dr. Galloway's judgement was upheld by Sir Arthur Keith, one of the greatest physical anthropologists of all time. Professor R. R. Dart has concurred in these conclusions.

Therefore, to summarise what we find in the Zimbabwean-Mapungubwean civilisation, in Rhodesia and the northern Transvaal, we perceive:

1. An early phase, centuries before the Bantu were in the land, when buildings were insubstantial and when defence was not of any great order. This comprehends the early Christian centuries, but may have started earlier. At this time the occupation of natural strong points, such as the "Acropolis" rocks above where, later, the "Temple" of Great Zimbabwe was to stand, was all the defence which was necessary against marauding bands of food-collecting and hunting Bushmen or pastoralist Hottentots.
2. A building phase of great megalithic monuments such as the "Temple" begun in the seventh century A.D., which may have coincided with the third period of building in the "Acropolis" at Great Zimbabwe. This marks a new cultural impetus in the civilisation. It may also reflect the beginning of invasion pressures in the north.
3. This last phase spread southwards and a comparable building period occurred at Mapungubwe by the tenth or eleventh century.
4. These dates definitely make untenable both the "Phoenician" theory for the building of the Zimbabwe structures as well as the quite irrelevant claim for the Bantu as their designers and creators, since the Bantu were not the owners of the land until several centuries later.
5. The finer dating considerations make untenable the Islamic Arab origins for these structures, as at Zimbabwe the building had begun a century or more too early for this to be possible.

The evidence is consistent with an alien, mineral-exploiting, culture, with artefacts which link them with the regions from the Mediterranean to Arabia or beyond. This culture was first established in a period which preceded the possibility of Christian or Moslem influence. Therefore, a pagan Caucasoid element is to be looked for. Later, however, by the time large-scale megalithic undertakings are in evidence (seventh century A.D.) we can look for a new cultural element which increased the population and the trade of the regions and which, at the same time, had need to create megalithic buildings on a large scale. This intrusion was late enough to be influenced by Christian or Jewish religious motifs. Since we have no evidence of the former, but we have of the latter (in surviving ethnological traits among certain Bantu tribes) then we can look for Jewish influence. However, if we can take Abyssinia as a parallel, then we would expect a synthesis between pagan and Jewish religious motifs. While we can expect massive fortifications and religious edifices, we would not expect more than the remains of huts for domestic use.

Within such a civilisation, as occurred in Ethiopia where a similar immigration of stone-edifice-building peoples settled, there would remain indigenous elements with whom, in time, cross breeding would occur. There would also be, long after the main settlements, a continual trickle of immigrants bringing later intrusive artefacts, to account for dateable articles of a much later period occurring in the latter part of the culture.

All this we may reasonably assume from the facts known to us, and which we shall see, as the evidence is demonstrated, is consistent with the origin of the civilisation in that direction to which we look in this book.

1. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** Zimbabwe. *The Mankind Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4, April-June, 1965, p.212.
2. **Bruwer, A. J.** *Zimbabwe: Rhodesia's ancient greatness*. Johannesburg: Hugh Kewartland, 1965.
3. **Murdock, G. P.** *Africa: its people and their culture history*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.307.
4. *Article: Archaeology, in: Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa, compiled by Eric Rosenthal*, London: Frederick Warne, 1965, p.23.
5. **Libby, W. T.** Chicago radio-carbon dates III, *Science*, 1952, 116, p.860, *quoted from* R. A. Dart, Foreign Influences of the Zimbabwe and pre-Zimbabwe eras, *Nada*, Salisbury, Rhodesia: Native Affairs Department, 1955, p.19.
6. **Dart, R. A.** Foreign Influences of the Zimbabwe and pre-Zimbabwe eras, *Nada*, Salisbury, Rhodesia: Native Affairs Department, 1955, p.19.
7. Important pottery find at Karoi, *Rhodesia Herald*, 12th September, 1967, p.5.
8. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** *The Mankind Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1965 footnote p.220.
9. **Mullan, James E.** *The Arab Builders of Zimbabwe*. Salisbury, Rhodesia: James E. Mullan, 1969, p.6.
10. *Ibid.* p.7.
11. **Jones, Neville.** *Guide to the Zimbabwe Ruins*. Bulawayo: Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments and Relics, 1960, p.7.
12. **Gardiner, Guy A.** *Mapungubwe*, vol. II. Pretoria: Van Schalk, 1963, p.75.
13. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** *The Mankind Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1965, p.31.

WE ARE NOW in a better position to establish who were the originators of the megalithic civilisation and its structures which we see today in Great Zimbabwe, Khami, Naletale, Dhlo Dhlo and Mapungubwe, and the extensive terrace cultivation and irrigation systems of Inyanga.

First of all, we do not think this civilisation arose from one single intrusive people. Or if it did derive from people of the same stock, then it arose from various settlements over a long period of time, so that the latercomers would be distinctly different in many cultural aspects from their earlier congeners. The development of the Zimbabwean civilisation must be seen as being the result of several phases. In this we have a close parallel to the Semitic settlement and ultimate domination of Abyssinia by the Sabaean Arabs.

We have shown sufficient evidence of contacts with the coastlands of East Africa from as early as the time of King Solomon, his Phoenician ally Hiram, King of Tyre, and the Queen of Sheba, a Sabaean Arab, who ruled a people famous as merchant venturers. How far south they penetrated we do not know. Whether they ever reached Mozambique is not known. Early Arab sources aver that they did, and that they even extracted gold from Rhodesia which according to them was the land of Ophir, the El Dorado of King Solomon and King Hiram's venturing. All this we do not know. It would be foolish to sneer at these possibilities, as has been only too fashionable, for the more our knowledge is enlarged the more do simple old statements in old texts prove to be true.

Our own view, which we have already stated earlier, is that if they reached so far south, it was in sporadic expeditions which first of all exploited alluvial gold of the Zambezi, Sabi and Limpopo rivers and their tributaries.

It must have been the knowledge that such treasures were to be found that caused the Pharaoh Necho II to send out his Phoenician expedition which not merely reached Mozambique but circumnavigated the whole of Africa.

The same goals were, no doubt, behind the massive Phoenician and Carthaginian expeditions. The latter sailed in the opposite direction to that



Cord-pattern design at Dhlo Dhlo Ruins.

taken by the Phoenicians, down the west coast of Africa, eventually reaching the Gold Coast, which they exploited.\*

Such profitable trade having once been created would not easily be left unexploited. Since a large share of this commerce was owned by the Sabaeans (or Yemenis), over whom the Queen of Sheba had ruled, who were foremost merchant venturers crossing the Indian Ocean at will, it is certain that they must have become with the passage of time more intimately associated, rather than less, with East Africa and the east coast of Central Africa. Therefore, it is hard to escape the conclusion that they must have had trading posts and settlements (no matter how primitive) down the coast of East Africa throughout the first millennium B.C.

The same people, as we have already shown earlier, invaded Eritrea and Abyssinia to conquer the Hamitic-speaking Cushitic peoples of the Horn of Africa, and set up their capital at Axsum (or Axum). It is due to this that the Emperors of Ethiopia claim descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The Amhara, who are the ruling stock of Ethiopia and who speak a Semitic language, are the descendants of these Sabaean Arabs. Thus from the seventh century B.C. at least, the Sabaeans were established as successful and conquering settlers in the Horn of Africa. Since at about the same time Necho's Phoenicians had circumnavigated Africa, and since in the time

\*If the "White Lady" of Brandberg is in fact the figure of a Caucasoid, as the Abbe Breuill argued, of Cypriot or Egyptian origin, then it is more likely that such intruders into south-west Africa came from the Phoenician contact with the Gold Coast. Mutwa insists that according to the secretly handed-down lore of the Bantu, this figure was that of a Caucasoid "Emperor", from the pre-Arabic Civilization and pre-Bantu Zimbabwe. He even says that they, the keepers of the traditions, know his name, which he gives. (*Indaba, my Children*. Johannesburg: Blue Crane Books, 1965, p.170.)

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

of Solomon there had been collaboration between Phoenicia and Israel, and Israel and Saba, it is very unlikely that the Sabaeans were not fully informed that Africa could be circumnavigated. If so it would be quite out of keeping with such a people that their settlements in Africa should be limited to Ethiopia.

We have already indicated the two routes, one by sea and the other overland from the borders of Ethiopia, which embrace Rhodesia and Mozambique as their goals.

The latter suggests the possibility that settlers were reaching the south not only from Arabia but also from Abyssinia. The point, however, which must not be overlooked is that both these peoples were of a common origin, since it is unlikely that venturers arriving from Ethiopia were from the Cushitic substratum. It is to the restless, adventurous, Sabaean settlers in Axsum that we must look for any northerners who penetrated to Rhodesia. Thus the seafarers and those using the land routes, being their Semitic relations based on Axsum, were all, in ultimate, derived from south-west Arabia, and so carriers of its various cultures.

Since the Bantu were still in the Congo in the fourth century A.D., and had not yet reached Uganda and Kenya, it seems clear that if there were foreign settlements in Rhodesia at that time, as from the carbon-14 dating and other evidence we are entitled to infer, the probability is that they were those of either Sabaeans, or Ethiopians, or both.

*An example of the masonry at the Khami Ruins*



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Such settlements would receive fresh immigrants constantly, as the gold was progressively and profitably exploited. In the end (whatever other elements there were from trading peoples, whether Indian or Malay, or even Chinese, who might also be arriving) trading colonies of a Semito-Cushitic or Semitic character would have been established. At some stage the settlers would have grown sufficiently populous, especially following some exceptional burst of settlement, that, from having only primitive and frontier-like trading and mining posts, they would have begun to develop towns of an urban character. This would account for some of the artefacts, which would seem to be earlier than the seventh century A.D. date and onwards, when the erection of Zimbabwe was in progress. It would also help to account for roots which go back sufficiently early to provide close parallels with the civilisations of Arabia and the Mediterranean, at an earlier period than that with which we are dealing at the time Zimbabwe was being built. For not all these earlier cultural inheritances need to be derived from the conservatism of Southern Arabia and Ethiopia of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Some may have been derived from the earlier more primitive settlements which go back centuries before. In the Zimbabwean civilisation we have a synthesis of several cultural streams of different periods in time and different levels of development.

As we have already indicated earlier, an advanced people in a largely empty land, occupied only by roving bands of Bushmen and Hottentots, would have little need for fortifications. These would arise with increasing population pressures. The beginning of Bantu expansion in the region of the Great Lakes would begin to generate this in the sixth century A.D. The pressure on the martial pastoralist Hottentots would compress them southwards, and their pressure would push the Bushmen in the same direction. Defences of a greater degree of efficiency would be needed by the settlers. Accounts being brought down the coast, and along the inland route from Abyssinia, would also sound notes of alarm. Consequently, from the seventh century, activity in defence would become more necessary than before, although the Bantu themselves, the cause of all this disturbance of settled conditions, had not yet reached Rhodesia in any significant numbers.

An exceptional increase in the settler population at the same time, making necessary more substantial towns, would call for more effective defences for them, because of their very size and the areas of settlement around them. Furthermore, with the enlargement of the settlements there would be a substantial increase of the slave population. This consisted of Bushmen, Hottentot, the equivalent of the Swahili Moslems, and, in addition, Bantu brought down the coast by Arab traders. This factor alone would make possible greater structures than were formerly necessary.

The evidence would seem, therefore, to be most economically explained by invasion pressures conjoined with a peak period of immigration, bringing new settlers and new techniques.

The great increase of population between the early settlements of the fourth century A.D. and earlier, and the seventh century A.D., when the





The Khami Ruins: note the chequer pattern.

The Khami Ruins.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION



A soapstone bowl from Zimbabwe.  
The words "Found by C. Mauch 187-"  
are scratched on the bowl,  
together with a sketch of a  
Sable Antelope.

megalithic buildings were begun at Zimbabwe, would seem to be indicated also by the enormous scale on which the extensive terraces at Inyanga have been constructed. This great increase is only to be explained by immigration. In days before tropical medicine, disease would always be a factor for keeping down the reproduction rate, and so any great step forward by non-indigenous peoples must have been due to large-scale settlement from another country. Natural increase of the existing settlers cannot be looked to, to account for this population explosion which made these gigantic megalithic undertakings possible.

Therefore between the fourth and the seventh centuries A.D. such an influx of settlers must have occurred. Furthermore they must have been a people accustomed to megalithic building. Although probably related to the earlier settlers, it is hardly likely that they would learn these techniques from them any more than engineers and architects will be likely to learn how to build sky-scrapers from the inhabitants of remote country villages, although they might well be of the same stock. The new influx of settlers must have come from metropolitan areas where stone-building on this scale was well-known.

Ruling out the Mediterranean lands as sources of such immigrants as most improbable, the most obvious are either, or both, southern Arabia or Ethiopia. Although we dismiss the north African countries and others of the Mediterranean littoral, yet since they are part of the same civilisation of megalithic building and terracing, many parallels can be drawn between the Zimbabwean civilization and the megalithic and later of the Mediterranean.

With the approximate period for the colonisation and the direction from whence it must have come established, we are now in a position to turn to history and identify it with some exactitude. We see little reason to change the identification which we had already proposed in 1965.<sup>1</sup> Briefly what we believe occurred was that Saba (Sheba), or the Yemen (which had had dominion over the whole coast of East Africa under Kariba-il, Charibael, who ruled from Zafor (Saphor) between 40-70 A.D.) came, not for the first time, under Hebrew influence. This led in the end to the state becoming Jewish by religion. As a result the Christians were persecuted as we have outlined in our discussion of Abyssinia and the Falashas in the sixth century. This led to an invasion in the sixth century by the Christian Emperor of Abyssinia who ruled a people, the upper class of which was of the same Sabaeen stock.

It is obvious that there must have been a flight of Judaized Sabaeans overseas to their colonies and depots in East Africa, as well as elsewhere. Such an emigration must have led to an immigration into the goldfields of Central Africa, where we have suggested there had been for centuries venturers from south-west Arabia. We believe the immigration was of considerable proportions, and, in itself, the exploitation and trade which flowed from it led to further overseas trade and so increased immigration. As a

consequence of this big increase of population in Rhodesia in the sixth century A.D., there were laid the foundations of the necessary population which was required to begin raising the megalithic towns, temples, and other settlements, which start with Zimbabwe in the seventh century and finish with the non-megalithic hill top settlement of Mapungubwe at the beginning of the second millennium of our era.

The events fit so closely in dating and are so consistent with what we know of the Semitic settlements of East Africa, that a very strong *prima facie* case is established. However, this interpretation does not rest only on the facts we have so far given, but is confirmed by the ethnographical evidence which can be called in support of it from several of the Bantu peoples, and in particular from the evidence provided by the Lemba and Venda, which we shall proceed to examine in due course.

For the moment we have provided the evidence first that Sabaeans and other south-west Arabians were the most likely exploiters of this region, and secondly that Judaized Sabaeans fleeing in the sixth century could have provided the basis of the development culminating in the seventh century in the building of Zimbabwe. Later we hope to prove that there are Judaized remnants in Rhodesia derived from Zimbabwe, and, therefore, if this be so, the case is proved that it was Judaized Sabaeans who were the principal force behind the Zimbabwean civilisation.

It should be observed that in Katanga have been found skeletons, adorned with copper and ivory, of a period settled by carbon-14 dating at A.D. 720 to 890. A site of such remains is found at Sanga in Katanga, associated with fine pottery. These people are related to the skeletons of the same period found by Hall—from Zimbabwe. Obviously these are the builders and miners who were the founders, or associated with the founders, of the Rhodesian civilisation.<sup>2</sup>

It is not possible to consider Zimbabwe and the other megalithic structures without a consideration of the Inyanga terraces. The size of Zimbabwe, Khami, Naletale, Dhlo-Dhlo, and the numerous smaller and less well-known settlements, means that there was in proto-historic Rhodesia a very big urban and industrial population. Therefore, there was needed a large agricultural complex to support them. This is, in fact, what we find in the many rows of terracing, which were formerly irrigated, at Inyanga. Now this infers that the agricultural engineers were of the same stock as those who built the cities or temples, whatever might have been the normal slave labour employed for the purposes of erection and then working the terraces. This is obvious and scarcely needs stressing.

Now Mr. Roger Summers has associated himself with the pro-Bantu school which, from the time of Randall-Maciver onwards, has claimed an "African" (by inference Bantu) or Bantu origin for Zimbabwe and related structures. Yet, when it comes to Inyanga he has stated and, in our opinion, quite rightly, that iron was introduced to Inyanga by an immigrant people who ought not to be labelled Bantu. They were neighbours of Bushmen, not of Bantu, as we might have expected, and were users of the beautiful

Ziwa pottery.<sup>3</sup> If Mr. Summers had been as objective in his statements concerning Zimbabwe, as the very logic of the case should have made him, since one cannot separate the agricultural from the urban industrial agglomerations in proto-historic Rhodesia, we should not have had to take him severely to task as we have had to do later in this book.

1. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** Zimbabwe. *The Mankind Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4, April-June, 1965, p.14.
2. **Hiernaux, Jean; Maguet, Emma and Buyst, Josse de**, Excavations at Sanga, 1958. *South African Journal of Science*. February, 1968, vol. 64, p.113.
3. **Summers, Roger** *Inyanga*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1958, p.311.

## CHAPTER

# 12

Ethnological Evidence  
of pre-Islamic Sabaeen  
and other  
Foreign Origins  
from Bantu Source

JAMES E. MULLAN,<sup>1</sup> as the latest exponent for Arab builders of Zimbabwe, does not look to Arabs in general but *Moslem* Arabs in particular. There is a very great difference between the point of view we are expressing here and his. For we see the Rhodesian civilisation as having its roots in Semitic explorations, which in time became mainly pre-Islamic Arab from Saba (Yemen), and culminated in an influx of at least semi-Judaized Sabaeen Arabs in the sixth century. Mr. Mullan waits until the Arabs have become Moslems, and he brings them in as the significant immigrant force a century or more later. This is consistent with the acceptance of Islam by the Arabs, but is inconsistent with the facts as we see them, and as we have thus far interpreted them.

Because Mr. Mullan looks to Islamic Arabs for the building of this megalithic culture, he searches eruditely in the ethnographical material of relevant Bantu (such as Lemba and Venda) for evidence of descent from Moslem Arabs, and concludes that many of these Bantu peoples are the descendants of Swahili Moslems. He sees, in some of the surviving names, those of Islamic Moslem leaders who settled on the coast of East Africa. Although his views are close to reality, we believe that they are a misinterpretation of the actual facts.

From the time the Semites first made contact with the coast of East Africa, both cultural mixture and genetic miscegenation took place with the native population. This led to the creation of Caucasoid-Negroid crosses whose speech became heavily charged with Arabic.

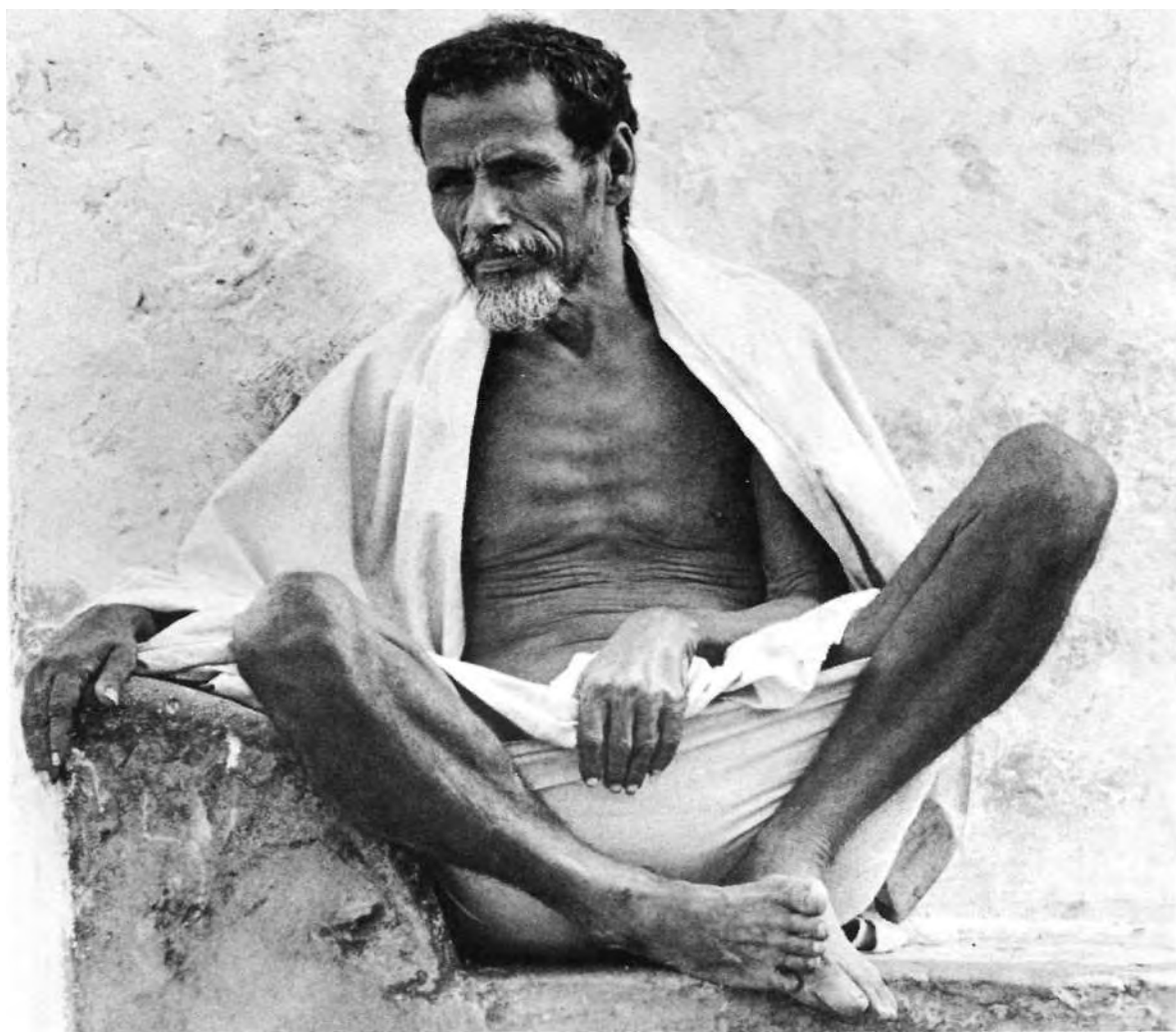
Later, when the Arabs of the coast accepted Islam, this religion came to have an impact on the mixed population, the members of which became what we now call Swahili Moslems. In the course of time, on the coast of East Africa, the centuries have obliterated the underlying pre-Islamic Semitic influences. This is, however, not so when we come to Rhodesia and the Transvaal, where such influences are clearly identifiable, as we have already shown.<sup>2</sup> The evidence which can be obtained from a study of the Venda and Lemba peoples makes it evident that they came from the north, they have an ancestry some element of which came from across the sea, and, so far as the





These distinctly Armenoid traits are to be found among the MaLemba in the BaVenda, Northern Transvaal.





The Bajuni of Lamu, Kanga coast of East Africa, are of Persian origin and, with Sabaean Arabs, have inhabited the coast and coastal islands including Zanzibar from the pre-Christian era. Note the Caucasoid facial features.

Lemba are concerned, they believe their male ancestry was originally white. The Lemba have very clear traces of Jewish religion, circumcision, and kosher laws, as the following quotation from our paper on this subject makes clear:

"The religious practice of the Lembas includes slaughtering animals for meat by bleeding them to death, and they do not eat rabbit, hare, pork, carrion, or meat with the blood in it, neither do they eat the barbel—a fish without scales, a kind of catfish—nor the duck, which they regard as a dirty bird. Freddie Ambani Muvhi confirmed this list of forbidden animals, and added that it is a sin to eat an animal with the blood in it. In addition the Lembas not only practise circumcision themselves but are essential in the circumcision schools among their neighbours. From this it is clear—and the fact is generally admitted—that they taught circumcision to their Bantu neighbours.

"It is not difficult to see that the Lembas adhere to the dietary laws of the Mosaic or Levitical code. This includes a prohibition against eating unclean birds, and although ducks are not specifically mentioned they are dirty feeders which could well have been regarded as forbidden, so their inclusion by the Lembas among forbidden foods may also be Levitical in origin.

"For comparison the provisions of the Mosaic Code in Leviticus XI, 3-10 and 39, should be noted:

*Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.*

*Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.*

*And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.*

*And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.*

*And the swine, though he divideth the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you.*

*Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.*

*These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat.*

*And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters they shall be an abomination unto you.*

*And if any beast, of which ye may eat, die; he that toucheth the carcase thereof shall be unclean until the even.*

"These similarities cannot be just a matter of chance. To reject pork and to kill in the kosher manner by bleeding would alone be a

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

remarkable coincidence, but when hares, rabbits, and scaleless fish are added to the list, together with a prohibition against eating carrion, the probability against coincidence is so great that we have to accept the fact that the Lembas observe the Mosaic Code, and we then have to explain its occurrence among this small tribe of traders who have Caucasoid genes and live in the northern Transvaal and some adjacent parts of Rhodesia. Moreover, only the Lembas bleed animals to death as enjoined by the Mosaic Code, and this act is restricted by them to the circumcised.<sup>3</sup>"

From this we are forced to conclude that we have two elements in the Bantu of Central and Southern Africa who are to be associated with Zimbabwe (as, we shall show, have these Lemba and Venda tribes):

*First.* Semitic physical features and some general Semitic cultural traits are to be distinguished, which come down from the early contact of heathen Sabaeans on the coast of East Africa, when the foundations of what later became the Swahili Moslems were laid.

*Secondly.* Tribes known to have been derived from the Zimbabwean civilisation have Jewish cultural and genetic traits. Thus a distinctly Armenoid type can be seen in the Venda, Lemba and some other peoples. These can only have been derived from the Bantu who came under the rule of Judaized Sabaeans, and are, in part, descended from them. For the fact is that in the Southern Arabians there is as strong an Armenoid element as among the Jews and Parsees. These Jewish cultural traits and Armenoid racial characters were not derived from Swahili who were brought into Rhodesia from some way up the coast by the Jewish Sabaean settlers. Since there were no Bantu tribes in Rhodesia until the ninth, tenth, or even the twelfth centuries or thereabouts, with whom racial and cultural mixture could have occurred, it is evident that the Jewish influence must have been implanted in Swahili Moslems after they were brought into Mozambique and Rhodesia as part of the labour force for the mines.

Naturally this Semitic element in the Bantu would be increased by further miscegenation as time passed. It may also be that in time Islamic religious elements entered into the pagan Bantu-Jewish Arabic matrix of beliefs and customs. This, however, would hardly be due to any concepts they received from the descendants of the Sabaean Arabs in Zimbabwe, since there is no evidence they ever became Moslems. We have pointed out there is no evidence here of a mosque, yet these are to be found in all the coastal Arab settlements of East Africa. Any Islamic traces in the descendants of these early pre-Moslem Swahili (that is, Bantu crossed with Arab peoples) would be due to infiltrations from later Swahili coastal peoples who had become Islamised. A large labour force was necessary to maintain the civilisation and, in addition to enslaved Hottentots and Bushmen, there must have been an active trade in Bantu or Swahili Bantu from the earliest times down to the end of the whole of this mining economy.

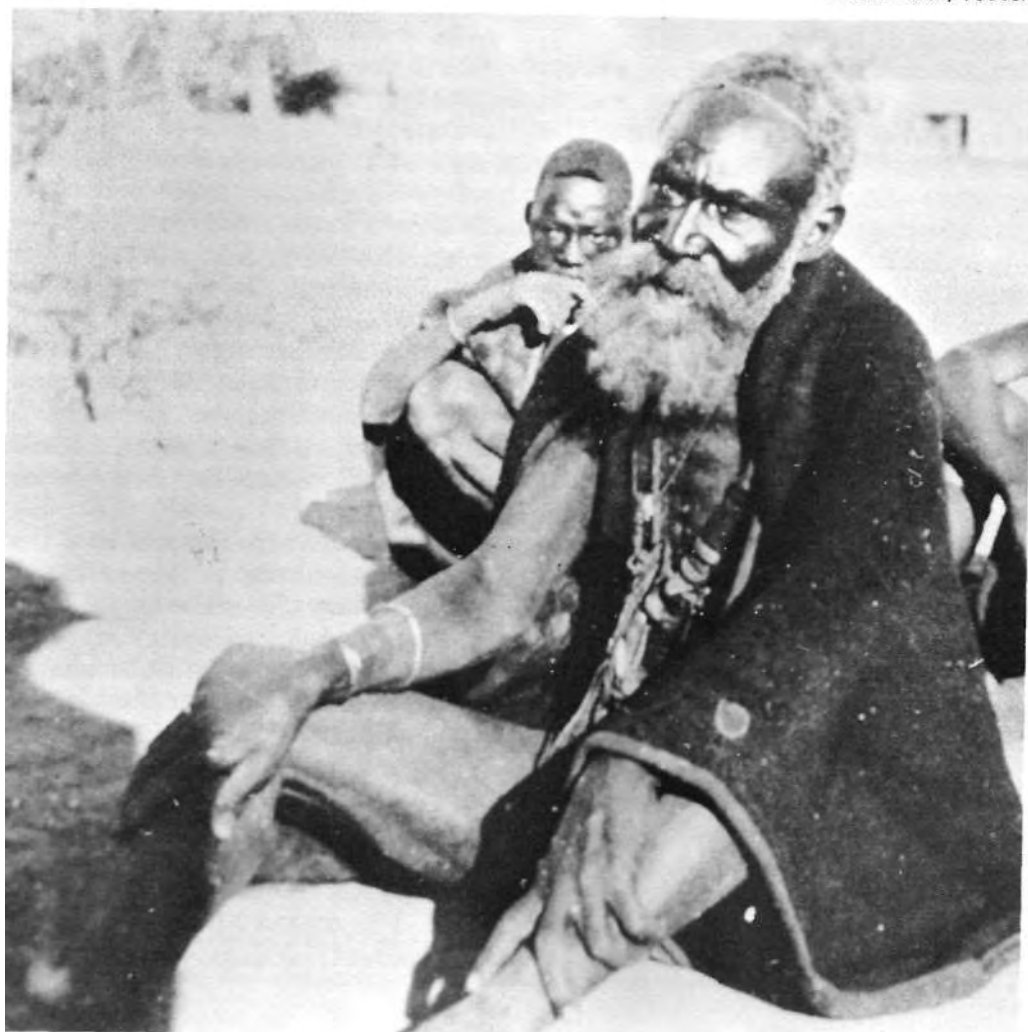
It should be emphasised that we have shown that the Lemba and Venda, although now mainly settled in Vendaland, in the Northern Transvaal,

## CHAPTER TWELVE



A member of the Makorekore tribe,  
Mount Darwin district, whose  
features show evidence of  
Caucasoid genes.

Traces of Caucasoid features in  
a Shona induna of the  
Victoria area, 1890s.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

came from Rhodesia and are clearly associated with Zimbabwe.<sup>4</sup> We have also indicated that these two peoples still show unmistakeable traces of Caucasoid blood, with indeed pronounced Arab traits. Since natural selection will militate against many Caucasoid traits, we can conclude that centuries ago these were even more perceptible than they are now.

Consequently it would seem to be inescapable that we have here clear proof that associated with the Zimbabwean civilisation are peoples who, like the Swahili Moslems, are crossbred between Arab and Bantu. This is the more so in the case of the Lemba people who are also the guardians of a clearly Jewish Mosaic tradition, just as the Arab and Bantu cross, which created the later Swahili, have a Moslem one.

The occurrence of Arab physical traits with a perceptible Mosaic tradition, combined also with a tradition of coming from the coast and the north-east, and with stories of a white male ancestry, is only explicable on the basis that the Lemba stock is derived from Jewish-Arabs who came down the coast of East Africa.

Since this combination of circumstances is also associated with a derivation of the Lemba and Venda from a megalithic-building people in Rhodesia, it is clear that it can only be rationalised on the basis of their being the cross between Jewish-Arabs and Bantu derived from Zimbabwe. Since the building of Zimbabwe is seventh century, it means that they must be derived through their Caucasoid genes from the Judaized Sabaeans expelled by the Christian Ethiopians from the Yemen in the sixth century A.D. who, we have postulated, settled in Rhodesia and laid the foundation of the population which built Great Zimbabwe.

We believe that the evidence of the Lemba tradition leaves no room for doubt that Judaized Arabs, of one of the greatest merchant venturing and industrialised peoples of its time, arrived in Mozambique and Rhodesia to give birth to this cross-bred people. The only time when this settlement could have occurred was the sixth century A.D., as before that the Arabs were Christian or pagan, and afterwards Moslems.\*<sup>5</sup>

This evidence is, therefore, absolutely consistent with the whole of the testimony so far, and makes the erection of the megalithic buildings in the seventh century, and not later, an absolute certainty. Thus the latest technique of carbon-14 testing, and the facts of cultural anthropology and ethnology, all combine with known historical facts, to make an unbreakable interpretation of both the time when Zimbabwe began to be erected in the form we now see, and who built it.

Dr. N. J. Van Warmelo<sup>6</sup> gives as the Lemba for sea the word *phusela* which is not Swahili nor Karanga. This is another indication of non-Bantu roots in this people. The Rev. H. v. Sicard draws attention to other ethnic elements which may be associated with the Lemba people.<sup>7</sup> He believes that,

\*Fritz Hommel says: "... thanks to the evidence of the later Sabeian inscriptions it becomes every day more certain that hundreds of years before the time of Mohammed, both Judaism and Christianity had taken root and found acceptance in various places in Arabia." (*The Ancient Hebrew Tradition as illustrated by the Monuments*. London: S.P.C.K., 1897, p.292.)



in their tradition in which they say they came from overseas in a big boat, we may have a reference to Madagascar. He points out that Dr. Wangemann<sup>8</sup> heard in 1867 that the Lemba were said to have lived at one time by the *Loather* River. This Miss Schlomann<sup>9</sup> identified with *leoathe* meaning sea. In relation to all this the Rev. v. Sicard draws attention to the fact that in Madagascar there is a large lake called A/Loatra, and, citing O. C. Dahl,<sup>10</sup> points out that the word for sea in Indonesian is *laud*. The Rev. v. Sicard takes Loathe to be a corruption of this.

It seems that there must have been a seepage of Indonesian words into the pre-Bantu language, and, ultimately, through this into the language of the Swahili Moslem population of the East African coast. It is unlikely that a people who brought their language to Madagascar, and who obviously settled along the coast from the borders of Mozambique to those of Somalia and imported new food plants to Africa, could have done all this without leaving many linguistic traces behind, as well as some of their racial genes. But we do think that these elements are more than intrusive in the main line of descent of the BaLemba.

The Rev. v. Sicard, in his illuminative comments<sup>11</sup> on this subject, draws attention to the statement of T. Price<sup>12</sup> that the Lemba are known as Mwenye. This name is also used in Mozambique for Indian Muslims<sup>13</sup> and the Indians at Zimbabwe are known by the same name of Mwenye.<sup>14</sup> He draws attention to the fact that the *Amwenye Vashava* were the great itinerant traders of the Lower Sabi Valley, who penetrated into the interior where they had regular markets.<sup>15</sup>

The same remarks which we have made concerning Indonesian elements are probably applicable here also. Indian strains there may well be. But Muslim Indians and Sabaean Arabs would appear much alike to the native peoples of Africa and, just as all Europeans became known as Franks or Frenchmen to the Muslims in the Middle Ages, so the same term *Mwenye*, came to cover all these Caucasoid elements. The use of this term for both Lemba and Indian peoples does prove, however, that the Lemba were not originally Bantu, but belonged to the Caucasoid racial stock.

In a Lemba chant the word *mbirata* occurs among the names for metals.<sup>16</sup> The Rev. H. v. Sicard points out that this is derived from the Cushitic *birta* and the Somali and Kafa *cirato*, all meaning iron, citing D. A. Olderogge.<sup>17</sup> However as the root of this word is found in the Hebrew **יָרָד** it is clear that the word is also Semitic, and since the higher culture of the Horn of Africa came from the Semitic Sabaean we ought to consider this word Semitic rather than Cushitic, or at least common to both linguistic groups.

There were two streams of metallurgical knowledge reaching southern Africa. There was the influence from overseas down the East African coast, but there was also another coming down inland from Nubia and taking in Ethiopia on the way. Consequently, the occurrence among a metal-working people such as the Lemba of words which show Hamitic associations is to be expected, especially as the Portuguese tell us they found Abyssinians even

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

in the ports of East Africa when they discovered that region of Africa. Furthermore, these words, once in common use among the Zinj on the east coast, would travel south with them, and could become loan-words among the Lemba who are certainly not of Nubian or Abyssinian-Cushitic origin in themselves, as their ancestors, according to them, arrived by sea from the north.

The Indian influence on the East African coast was not limited solely to traders and trading colonies in the ports. Jordanus, who lived at the beginning of the fourteenth century,<sup>18</sup> tells us that the East African coast, south of Somalia, was called India Tertia. The Rev. H. v. Sicard<sup>19</sup> cites L. Homburger<sup>20</sup> as saying that the Indians had a state between the East African coast and Lake Victoria, in what is now Kenya. Professor R. R. Dart<sup>21</sup> cites Ingram<sup>22</sup> to the effect that the Indians also penetrated inland to the Great Lakes. When their state was destroyed, he says its people spread as far south as Lake Nyasa and the Limpopo.

This would appear to be supported by the statement<sup>23</sup> that the traditions of the Ndoroba and Naudi, who in the sixteenth century settled between the sources of the Vaso Nyiro and Lake Victoria, say that they were preceded by a long-haired pastoral people who had stone kraals, and were called Eborata.<sup>24</sup> They were driven out by the Masai.

These people could have been Hamitic Cushites, such as the Galla, or they could have been Indians, as the name Eborata would appear to be the same as *Bharat*, the Hindu name for their country of India to this day. If this is the explanation, it completely substantiates the view that there was formerly an Indian state in Central Africa.

The mention by Idrisi of a city, Tarma, where rice was grown on a big lake from which flowed the Nile, and the mention in the Indian Puranas dating from 500 A.D.<sup>25</sup> of a mountainous country whence rose the holy river (the Nile) called S'harma, would also seem to confirm this Indian settlement in Central Africa.

Therefore, to Rhodesia, there must have come cultural elements of Indonesia, the Hamitic north, and India, and the genes from these peoples, who bore these cultural elements in their drift to the south, mingled with the Sabaeans which, we believe, was the foundation stock on the basis of which the Zimbabwean civilisation arose. We may, therefore, expect to find traces of all these peoples. All of them preceded the arrival of the Bantu, and in some cases their migration southwards was due to Nilotic and Bantu pressure exerted on their territories in the north.

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## CHAPTER

# 13

### The Relevance of the Religious Concepts found in the Zimbabwean Civilisation

THUS FAR we have isolated certain religious phenomena to assist us in establishing not only the period at which Great Zimbabwe, as we now know it, came to take shape, but also the source of the people who had these religious traits. The result of this has been to confirm explicitly a seventh century A.D. date for the building of the Temple at Zimbabwe, and a derivation from Saba (Yemen) of the immigration which led to the expansion of population which made such building possible, the immigrants having been Judaized Arabs fleeing from the Ethiopian conquest of their homeland. If we limited ourselves to these facts alone, we would gain an incomplete picture of the background of the immigrants and the contribution they came to make to the social anthropology of southern and central Africa.

Although the immigrants had assumed some aspects of the Hebrew religion, they were not without traits derived from other earlier cults in Arabia. After only a short period of Jewish, and before that of Christian, religious influence, it would be inconceivable that some earlier concepts had not survived among these people. After centuries of Christianity, we still have Easter and the Easter egg of the pagan Germanic goddess Easter, the tree of the pre-Christian Germans and Celts, and the mistletoe of the latter. Furthermore, the arrival of Judaized Sabaeans fleeing from the Abyssinian conquerors of the Yemen in the sixth century constituted when all is said and done only a peak in immigration to Rhodesia. They came to settlements which were already established, and had been for generations before the Sabaeans had passed under Christian and Jewish influence. As a consequence, the pagan Arabian religious beliefs and customs would have been flourishing among them.

A consideration of other religious elements of the civilisation will emphasise further that these elements are not of Bantu origin, and it will show that they belong to a background of beliefs existing among those peoples out of whom came the later immigrants who built Zimbabwe. In so far as some of these concepts, ideas, and customs, have come to exist among Bantu peoples, there are reasonable grounds for believing that such have been borrowed from the Zimbabwean people.

The cult object which is most striking of all, and which forms no part of Jewish religion, is the Zimbabwe bird. Although in some instances the descriptions of it tend to give the impression that this bird is unique to Zimbabwe, this view can only be accepted so far as the particular size and form of stylisation which it takes in Rhodesia might be concerned. Investigation very soon shows it is not limited to Rhodesia. For instance at Helwan, where we find examples of the art and civilisation of the First and Second Egyptian Dynasties<sup>1</sup> which date from about 3200 B.C., we find stone symbols of the falcon of the god Horus. Again, on a sherd of pottery from the cremation cemetery (1400 B.C.) at the Tarxien temples in Malta is the figure of a bird in the same upright position as in Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup> Professor V. Gordon Childe<sup>3</sup> illustrated an Egyptian First Dynasty bracelet. If each segment of this bracelet were enlarged to the size of stelae, they would look like Zimbabwe birds. Childe points out that the Falcon Horus appears as early as the period of Middle Predynastic graves.<sup>4</sup> There is the possibility, according to some, that this symbol originated with a falcon dynastic race in the Egyptian delta, and spread thence over Egypt and further afield. We shall shortly put forward a different view which, we believe, throws direct light on the origin of the Zimbabwe bird.

In Babylonia and Assyria we find a bird symbol involved in religious concepts. The storm god was Zu in the form of a bird.<sup>5</sup> The eagle appears as a deity of fertility with such solar attributes as had Horus. The same bird cult is found generally among ancient Semites, where we find it also in the form of a vulture (*nasr*) and of a great bird (*auk*). In Crete we find examples of a female idol with birds on her head.<sup>6</sup>

Bent,<sup>7</sup> citing W. St. Chad Boscawen, draws attention to the fact that the Arabian Nome in Ancient Egypt had as its feudal god Sopt, and that Sopt is called the Spirit of The East, the Hawk of Horus of the East. Naville<sup>3</sup> holds that this bird represented Venus as the herald of the sun. This would appear to link together Venus, the Hawk, the feudal god of the Arabian Nome, and so the Arabs.

J. T. Bent<sup>9</sup> has drawn attention to the ancient Egyptian use of the falcon sculptured upon rocks in the vicinity of mines at Wadi Magharah, and suggests that this was an emblem of the mines. He points out that Sinai, another mining region, was specially sacred to the goddess Hathor associated with the sparrow-hawk. Be that as it may, and there is nothing improbable in itself in a bird symbol being a mining cult emblem, we shall enlarge on that connection later. Meanwhile, it is important to point out that bird symbols belong to the whole of the Hamitic and Semitic world which dominated north Africa, sweeping round in a crescent form to southern Arabia.

Certainly the nearest countries to Rhodesia which have bird cult symbols are those very lands to which we have had to look for the origin of the Zimbabwean civilisation.

The fact that there are stories of a bird in the religious concepts of some of the Bantu, is not evidence that they were the originators of this bird symbol. From the evidence which we have just given, it is clear that the

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

symbology of the bird was deeply embedded in the cultures of ancient civilised Hamito-Semitic peoples, millennia before we find it among the Bantu. It is inconceivable that these ancient peoples derived their theology from the Bantu, who must have been at an even more primitive stage of cultural evolution several thousand years ago than they were when Europeans made contact with them. Since most borrowing is from the advanced to the primitive,\* it must be held that the Bantu are indebted to civilised man for their bird cults. Wherever such are found, it is possible to show they are related to those of the Hamito-Semitic peoples. This has been convincingly demonstrated by Eva L. R. Meyerowitz.<sup>10</sup>

It has been argued, as we have pointed out elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> that the Zimbabwe bird is similar to the Bantu bird symbol which is carried for protection from lightning and for other purposes, perhaps connected with the chiefs. Since the ceremonial use of the falcon bird symbol has found its way from Ancient Egypt to the Akan of Ghana,<sup>12</sup> it is clear that the Negroid peoples have drawn upon the religious concepts of the civilised peoples of ancient times who lived beyond the Sahara. Therefore, there is no reason why the bird associated with Bantu tribes should not have come from Zimbabwe, which bird in its turn was of the same origin as that of West Africa, to where it came from Egypt.

In Southern Arabia there is an Armenoid strain in the people which has puzzled anthropologists. Whatever it signifies, it is clear that there must have been a migration from the Caucasus and Armenian region. If so it must have been at a very remote period of time.

The Hurrian people, who were of that racial strain, moved from that region at the time of the second aeneolithic period into Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Elam. This was in, or about, the fifth millennium B.C. No doubt the Sumerians are to be associated with this stock.

This element, which we trace to Southern Arabia, mingled with the Caucasoid Hamitic peoples, who, it is now clear, were settled there before the arrival of the Semites. When these Caucasoid Hamitic peoples (who were of the same stock as the Hamitic-speaking peoples of the Mediterranean basin) crossed over into the Horn of Africa, they carried with them their Hamitic speech which they imposed on the Australoid Cushitic indigenous stock (using those terms in their ethnological, and not their historical, sense).

This accounts for the fact that while the Hamitic people of the Hamito-Cushitic group in north-east Africa have a language which is Hamitic, it also shows connection with the languages which belong to the original homeland of the Hurrians. Thus Fritz Hommel<sup>13</sup> was able to say, quoting the evidence of Dr. E. Glaser, the Arabian explorer, that north-east Africa was colonised by Elamites from Arabia. Dr. Hommel goes further; speaking

\*Despite, in our day, the exception which proves the rule, namely, of the practice of advanced peoples adopting primitive and barbaric forms of art and music.



of this view he says:

"This theory is supported by the fact that in the so-called Kushitic languages of north-east Africa, such as the Galla, Somali, Bedsha, and other allied dialects, we find grammatical principles analogous to those of the Early Egyptian and Semitic tongues, combined with a totally dissimilar syntax presenting no analogy with that of the Semites or with any Negro tongue in Africa, but resembling closely the syntax of the Ural-altaic languages of Asia to which, at any rate as far as syntax is concerned, the Elamite language belongs. According to this view, the much discussed Kushites (the Aethiopians of Homer and Herodotus) must originally have been Elamitic Kassites, who were scattered over Arabia, and found their way to Africa."

These Elamitic Hurrian peoples (in common with their related Anatolian relatives) laid great stress on the worship of the mother-goddess. As Eva L. R. Meyerowitz<sup>14</sup> says, there is every reason to believe that this mother-goddess in the Semitic world became Ishtar, Astarte, Ashtoreth, or in Southern Arabia, Athar.

When the Semites expanded southwards and forced the mixed Caucasoid-Hamitic-Hurrians over the Red Sea into the Horn of Africa, their remnants were absorbed by these Semites. This accounts for the survival of both Armenoid strains and Hamitic linguistic elements in the Arabic of Southern Arabia, as noticed, for instance by Bertram Thomas,<sup>15</sup> and supported by Sir Arthur Keith and Dr. Wilton Marion Krogman.

The mother-goddess, now associated in the Semitic world with Venus, would be adopted from these earlier white peoples. Eva L. R. Meyerowitz<sup>16</sup> is obviously correct in pointing out that in Ishtar-Astarte-Ashtoreth-Athar we have the same root which we find in Athor or Hathor (Greek *Athyr*) and in Hor (Greek *Horus*).

In Egypt we find that Horus and Hathor are both associated with the falcon. Thus we find that Hathor flew from Punt to Egypt as a female falcon. Horus, who is a solar deity, is well-known as the falcon god. He was also the male aspect of Hathor. Although as the "Lady of Punt" Hathor is symbolised by the lion, this is because that animal represents Punt itself, but it is as the falcon that she is incarnate. The evidence goes to indicate that Hathor and Horus represent a falcon clan. If, as we have mentioned earlier, there were a falcon clan in the Nile Delta, the explanation probably lies in some association direct or indirect with these deities.

Now it is significant that not only is the root of Hathor's name the same as that of the Sabaeen Athar, but, besides being a moon-goddess, mother-goddess and mother of the dead, in her form of fertility goddess she is Venus. In these respects, and especially as moon goddess and Venus, her roles are identical with those of Athar-Ishtar.

In the light of this we entirely support Eva L. R. Meyerowitz's statement:

"From this we may deduce that the falcon clan people of Horus and Hathor were originally Hurri, who had formed a clan among

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

the people of Punt in Southern Arabia with whom they emigrated into Nubia to found a second Punt."<sup>17</sup>

Now the relevance of all this to Zimbabwe is very important. We have already indicated that we look to the pre-Islamic Sabaeen Arabs as an essential element in the foundation of the Zimbabwean civilisation, and that means they must have brought the goddess Athar with them. The goddess Athar is the same as Hathor (the male aspect being Horus) and their symbols are the falcon. This gives a clear indication in what direction we should turn to explain the Zimbabwe bird.

If there should be any doubt about this it is absolutely set at rest when we remember that the divinity with which this bird symbol is associated has some clear associations with gold. Thus we read of Pharaoh's Horus of gold; the falcon is placed over the sign which stood for gold; Hathor is called 'the golden one'; and we have drawn attention earlier to the fact that the falcon in Egypt is sculptured on rocks near mines, while Sinai, another mining region, was especially sacred to Hathor.

Therefore, not only was the falcon of Hathor-Athar (and male counterpart Horus) sacred to Egypt, Punt, and Southern Arabia, but the deity presided over mining, and particularly gold.

When, therefore, we find at Zimbabwe the bird symbol looking down from the ramparts onto the Temple, the Mecca of a gold-exploiting civilisation, it is abundantly clear in this context that it is the deity presiding over and blessing the activities of an energetic Sabaeen people in their gold exploitation of Rhodesia. These symbols are not to be explained by obscure Bantu bird emblems. In West Africa where they have this sign, as Eva L. R. Meyerowitz has convincingly shown, they derived it from Hathor and Horus through Egypt. Any occurrence of the use of the bird symbol by Bantu in Southern Africa must be attributed to borrowing from the falcon of Athar of the Sabaeans, or of Hathor, or from the eagle of Ra of the Egyptians, and not the other way round.\*

Thus the bird symbol of Zimbabwe is one of the most convincing pieces of evidence for the origin of the people and the religion of Zimbabwe.

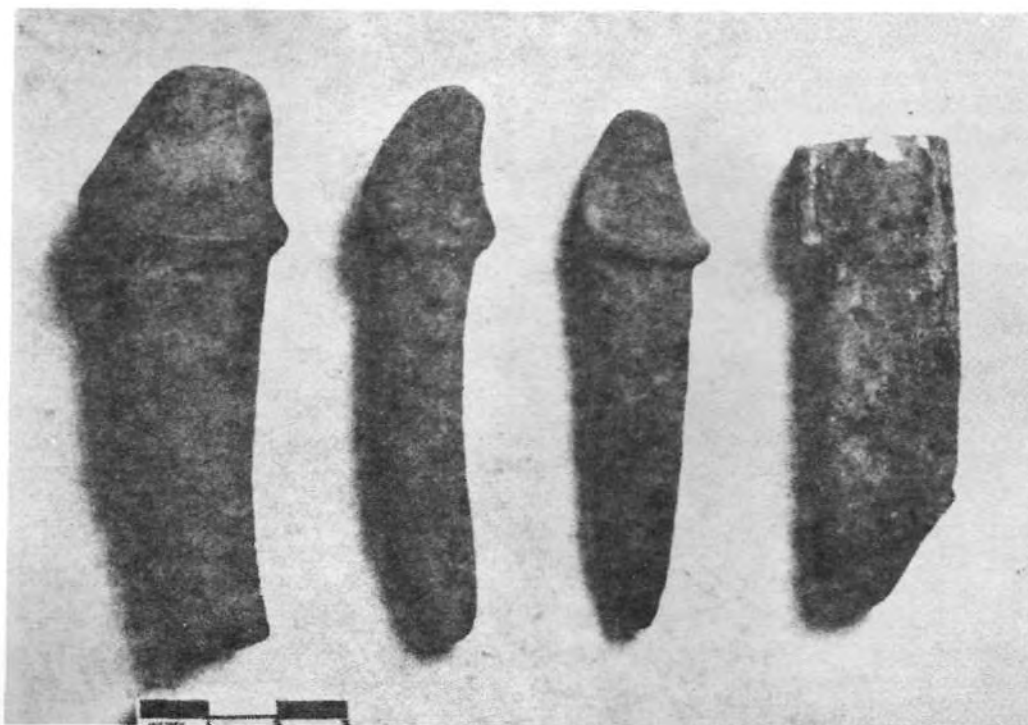
In Zimbabwe there are to be found many phallic objects.<sup>x</sup> It should be observed also that since the bird symbol is depicted in a phallic form, this would suggest the possibility of some association between the two concepts.

\*We have shown in this book and elsewhere, the relationship of the Venda to the Zimbabwean civilization. It is of some significance that the Venda worshipped Ra Luvhimba, *luvimba* being a word which means eagle. This would seem to be a survival from the concept of God as represented in the symbol of a bird. It is strange that we have the name Ra Luvhimba, since Ra was the Egyptian god who was represented by an eagle. We may have here evidence of Egyptian religious influence in Rhodesia just as we have it in West Africa.

<sup>x</sup>Randall-Maciver, tries to deny this, and then draws a red herring across this trail of the argument by suggesting that, even if there is phallicism there, it also occurs in West Africa! Of course it exists there, in a region saturated by influences from the White phallic-conscious northern African peoples. The existence of the Rhodesian phalli cannot be denied and are illustrated in this book. (*Mediaeval Rhodesia*. London: Macmillan, 1906, p.100.)



Roman and Egyptian phalli.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

We have, therefore, to consider the whole question of phallicism, the Bantu sexual organisation of society, and the relation of this subject to Zimbabwe and the outer world, in order to interpret the meaning and origin of this cult in the Zimbabwean civilisation.

The impact of the knowledge of procreation on mankind led to the superseding of a matriarchal, matrilineal, mother-goddess dominated society by one in which patriarchal, patrilineal, and a father-god concept came to prevail. The knowledge of the role of the male in breeding was one of the great forward steps in human development. There is little doubt that the "Tree of Knowledge" of *Genesis* is related to this advance, as the tree, and the serpent because of its erectile properties, are both phallic symbols, while the word *to know* is that which is associated with sexual enlightenment. The purpose of the male in breeding was probably recognised first among the early Aryans and the knowledge spread ultimately to the Mediterraneans, Armenoids, Semites, and other Caucasoids. In religion this meant that father-right came to dominate in those northern groups which had longest enjoyed the knowledge of paternity, while in the southern stocks a synthesis took place in which the male deity came to have some sort of consortship with the mother-goddess. These two principles survived vast changes in religious evolution. Even today, in Christianity itself, the Virgin Mary enjoys a position much more analogous to the mother-goddess, the Queen of Heaven of the pre-Christian Caucasoid religions, in the southern variants of Christianity, than she does in the northern.

While the Semitic, Hamitic, Sumerian, and Dravidian world was making this synthesis of Isis and Osiris, Astarte and Baal, and so on according to the culture involved, the whole of Africa remained completely blind to the facts of life. Just as certain oceanic peoples<sup>18</sup> were in ignorance of paternity, so was Negroid Africa until quite recent times. That is why in some Negro cultures women would go and lie in the rain in order that it should fertilise them and cause their "crops" to grow, as it did those of their fields.

How significant was phallicism in Egyptian religion is to be understood from the following quotations from the *Book of the Dead* (cap. XVII) where we read:

"What is this? It is the soul of Ra. It is his phallus with which he joined himself to himself . . . What is this? These are the drops of blood that flow from Ra's phallus . . . They have turned into gods who find themselves in Ra's presence."<sup>19</sup>

The reference here to blood in relation to the phallus suggests that it is in connection with the Egyptian practice of circumcision. (There is something similar in Greek mythology, where, according to Hesiod, Kronos castrated his father Ouranos, and the blood falling into the sea turned into the goddess Aphrodite.)

Osiris is also associated with the phallus. In fact he lost his and had to have an artificial one made. From this Horus was born of Isis. This goddess is clearly associated with the phallus. The phallus had reference to creation and life, and it symbolised a risen god.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Ultimately knowledge of paternity came to be disseminated in Africa but it did not universally displace mother-right. Where father-right came to prevail, outside influences can often be traced as the source of it, just as in East Africa circumcision (which is to be associated with peoples accepting patriarchal concepts) is of foreign origin.

Where active emphasis upon male reproductive powers occurs in Africa, it is first of all among those tribes and peoples who have received this knowledge, and the cults which go with it, from non-Negroid sources. According to Zaborowski-Moindron<sup>20</sup> the phallic cult spread from Egypt to West Africa. Burton tells us of it in Dahomey<sup>21</sup> where we know there has been constant contact with the Berber and other Hamitic tribes across the Sahara. In this case, as very often happens in such instances, the phallus is not the cult symbol used. Instead, it is a figure of a man, usually with an erect penis.

Figurines from Zimbabwe, possibly of a goddess.





Ithyphallic image. From the collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities in the Cabinet of the Hon. W. Hamilton, Naples, 1766.

Even where there seems to be a well-defined phallic element in the religion, there is often a very marked female concept, in both the religion and social organisation, indicating that the introduction of phallicism is of later origin. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, a malevolent male god called Eshu or Elegbara is represented by the phallus; nevertheless, the organisation of society is matrialatric and they worship the goddess Igbetti, who is symbolised by a representation of a vagina.

The Ibo, Jukun, and Ibibio, all of the west coast of Africa, use erect clay cones as phalli. However, all these countries have been under Egyptian Phoenician, Berber, and Arab influences for millennia. In view of the basic matriarchal organisation of life of these Negroid peoples, it is to non-Negroid and white peoples that we must look for the introduction of models of the phallus to represent, in reproduction and religion, the male principle and its function.

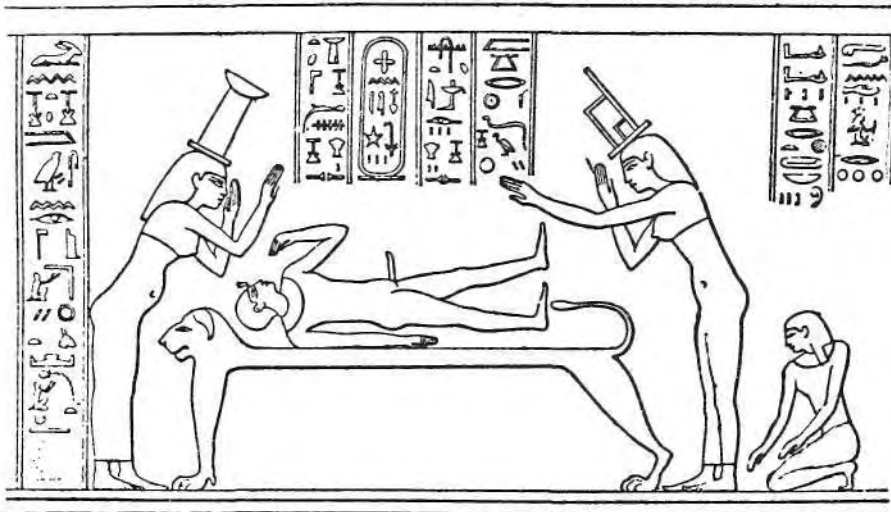
The Congo, although more remote from white influence, has experienced it through the Sudan in the north, and from the coast of East Africa, as well as from West Africa. Therefore it is not surprising to find the phallus symbol used among some tribes. That the phallus was not indigenous in these cases is proved by its very construction. The Congolese are described as carrying in procession a large phallus which they made to rise (or erect) and fall with the aid of ropes. Herodotus describes the very same phallic machine as having

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

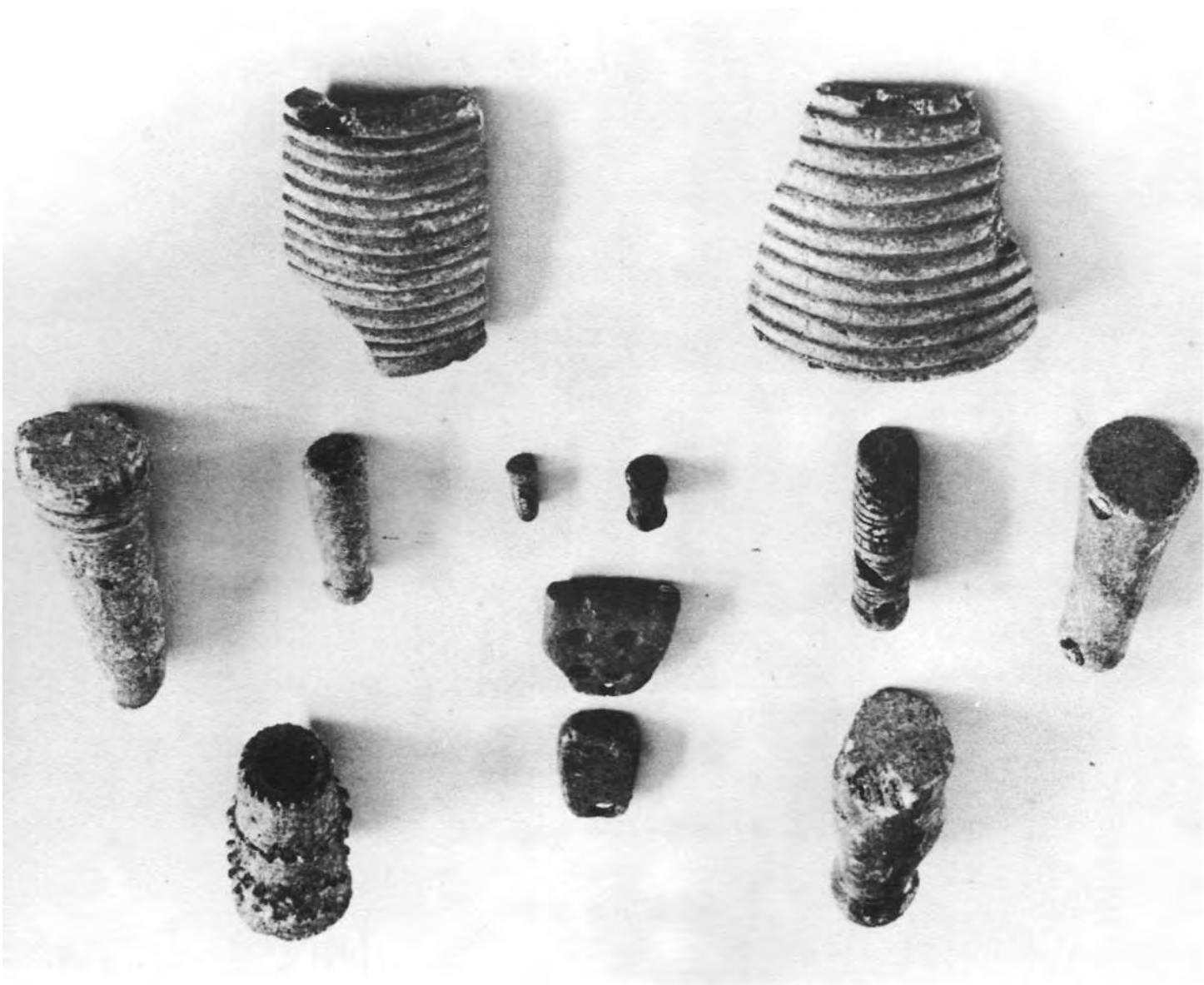
Egyptian phallic worship depicting the male and female creative forces in the mythology of Ancient Egypt.



Egyptian worship of the phallus.







Soapstone objects found by R. N. Hall at Zimbabwe, showing stylised human figures and phalli pendants, pipes for smoking Indian hemp (dagga) and amulets. The lower objects are of unknown use.

been in use in his time (484-424 B.C.) in Egypt. The same contraption is reported from Dahomey in West Africa, suggesting also an Egyptian source.<sup>22</sup>

In the New World the emphasis on male sexuality is primarily by way of idols which possess huge phalli.<sup>23</sup> However, the origin of phallic figures and phalli in the New World could be due to independent evolution of the concept, and need not be due to diffusion from their centre among the White races of the Old World.

With the spread of father-right went phallicism as an active principle in religion. Thus, among the Aryan Hindus, and ultimately among the Dravidians as well, the lingam of Siva is the principal object of worship issuing out of the yoni of Uma, or Sakti, wife of Siva representing the female principle,<sup>24</sup> thus indicating in the combination of the male and female organs of generation the principle of creation. With the lingam of Siva there is always associated the bull. This symbol, which is found in the form of two bovine figures on the "Acropolis" at Zimbabwe, is consistent with the phallic concept, quite apart from its also being associated with the religions of the Mediterranean lands.

There can be little doubt that the ziggurat of the Babylonians, and the tower in each mosque, owe their origin to the same phallic aspects of religion. The tall towers which form the Hindu temples would appear to be phallic. The standing stones of the megalithic cultures have the same significances. If this is in doubt, a consideration of the synthesis of mother- and father-right in what would have been pre-Celtic Cornwall (but surviving into our times) would seem to settle the question. Here we find not only the phallic standing stones, but also the men-an-tol, or holed stone. Through this children are still pulled as part of an old custom, although the meaning is long lost. The men-an-tol is the equivalent of the yoni—the womb of the female goddess—by passing out of which, one is born again. Thus the Atlantic megalithic peoples maintained side by side the erect stone phallus of the father-god and the older holed-stone of the mother-goddess.

The prehistoric stelae of Abyssinia are among the oldest examples of phallic religion in Africa.<sup>25</sup> Since the Ethiopians are known to have had an influence down the coast of East Africa, this is also a people who would help to maintain a *continuum* of culture from the Mediterranean and Arab countries to Central Africa.

Before the development of Islam swept away the female principle from Semitic religion, the Semitic and Hamitic peoples were in the dualistic stage where they had the mother-goddess cult and that of the father-god as well. Normally, so far as the Semites are concerned, this is combined with a patriarchal type of society. In contradistinction, the Hamites tended to have a female form of inheritance, some evidence of which lasted on into Ancient Egypt.

With these Hamito-Semitic peoples, who were spread out from North Africa to Southern Arabia, there were religious cult symbols, among which, derived from the patriarchal religious background, was the phallic tower,

the erect phallus, and other symbols of a like nature, such as the stone pillars and the serpent. The mudros pillar symbol was employed by the Phoenicians, and the Bible has frequent references to Baal-Pehor<sup>26</sup> in connection with Baal worship. Actually Jehovah was also symbolised in this way, and Jacob's Pillar was such a standing stone. Often it was associated with the sun god. Siva, who is symbolised by the phallus in Hinduism, is a sun god.

We have shown in this review of phallicism that it is not indigenous to the Bantu and Negroid peoples, but is widespread among the Caucasoid stocks. Where it occurs among the Negroes there are such close parallels with similar manifestations of it elsewhere as to make it evident that it has been borrowed as a cult from the Hamito-Semitic world. Furthermore, where father-right has displaced mother-right among the Negroid peoples, the inference is that it has been imported from outside.

We have seen the particular forms and significance of the phallus among the Caucasoid peoples from Europe to North Africa, Arabia, and India. Among the Negroid peoples there is nothing comparable.

However, when we compare the phallic mudros of the Phoenicians, the tower of such a mosque as that of Malindi on the Kenya coast, and the tower which appears on coins of Byblos in Phoenicia, we realise that the tower at Great Zimbabwe is a unique feature in Bantu Africa.\* It is entirely of the same essential nature as these similar structures which belong to the whole of the ancient world where peoples of Caucasoid races have settled. From this we are forced to conclude that the phallic tower at Great Zimbabwe belonged to a non-African religion. Certainly, those who persist against all reason in saying that Zimbabwe is of Bantu origin had better show us where they can find genuinely indigenous Bantu stone-built phallic towers.

We are now in a position to consider the implication of this in connection with the Rhodesian civilisation, where phalli which are entirely comparable with those found elsewhere in the old world have been discovered. Not only do these phalli indicate an origin which stems from the civilisations of the Caucasoid world, being a heritage shared with Rome, Egypt, and other regions, but what is even more important is the fact that the penis in these Rhodesian cases is circumcised.

The *ancient* provenance of circumcision in the Old World is not in any doubt. It is found among the Semites and some of the Hamites and the Cushitic peoples. As it did not occur among the Hamitic White Libyans (for we find their dead mutilated by the Egyptians after battle—foreskin collecting always having been a species of trophy hunting among those who practiced circumcision,<sup>x</sup> as testicle collecting was among the Cushitic people until modern times) this would seem to indicate that it did not arise as a Hamitic custom. This appears to support the view that the Egyptians borrowed it from the Semites—although they could have been influenced

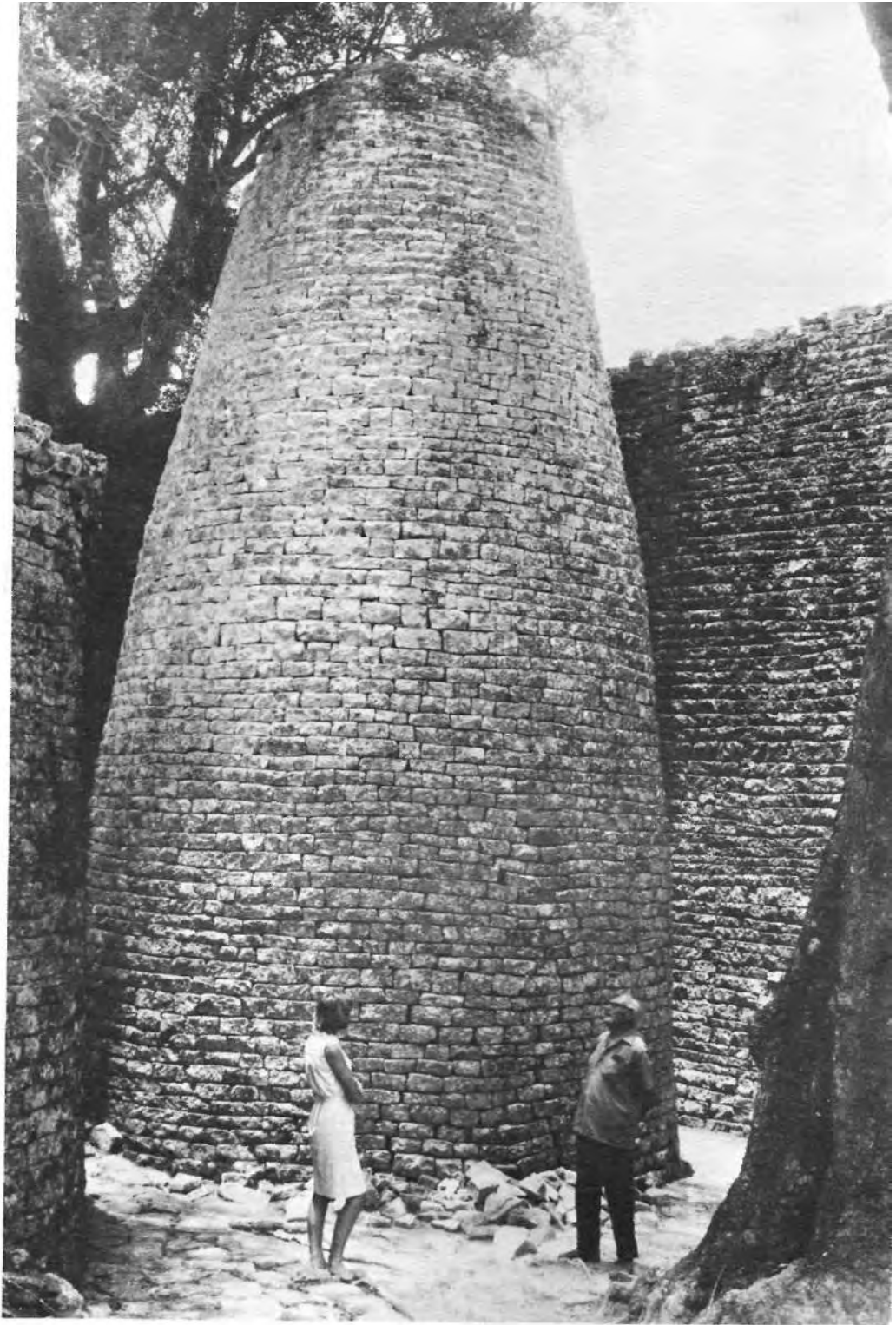
\*Bent quotes Montfaucon's statement in connection with the Tower of Zimbabwe, that all Arabians worshipped a tower. (*The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.115.)

<sup>x</sup>"The King desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines . . . ." (*I Samuel*, 18. v.25.)

A coin of Byblos showing the round tower analogous to that at Zimbabwe.



A round tower, showing pattern work in the masonry reminiscent of Zimbabwe. This stone round tower is situated in the fortified village of Bajil in the Tahama, near the Red Sea, Yemen.



The Stone Tower at Zimbabwe.

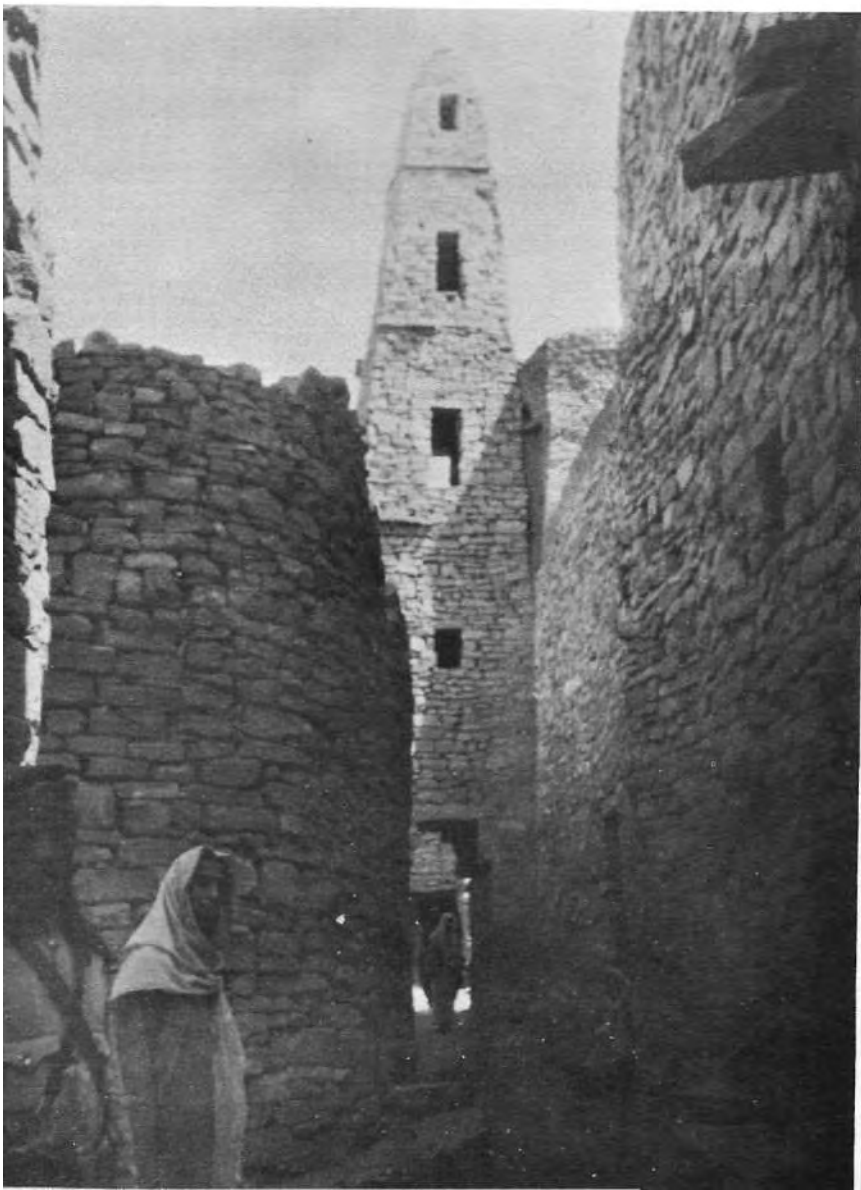
by the Cushitic peoples who have had a long-standing attachment to this practice. Therefore, unless this custom were introduced into Rhodesia by the Egyptians or the Abyssinians, it could only have come from the Semites. It is no use arguing that it came from the Bantu, as we have shown that they did not create this civilisation. Furthermore, circumcision could not have arisen among peoples who were ignorant of paternity, as were the Negroids, evidently, long after the knowledge had come to other stocks. This is confirmed by the fact that circumcision was introduced to the neighbouring Bantu peoples by the Lemba who are clearly derived from a former White Semitic ancestry in Zimbabwe.

The fact, therefore, that, as Boris de Rachewiltz observes,<sup>27</sup> the "stone phalli at Zimbabwe provide extremely early evidence of circumcision", ineluctably supports the view that the phalli represent non-Bantu figures introduced from outside Rhodesia.

The remains of a  
round tower of the  
period of Hammurabi.



Nineteenth century minaret of the mosque at Malindi-Zanzibar, showing the chevron design.



Megalithic type of building in juxtaposition with a tower, as still to be found in Arabia.



It seems impossible, therefore, to form any conclusion other than that in the matrix of Zimbabwe religion, which may well have had a Jewish origin, there were religious concepts derived from White peoples from Arabia.\*<sup>28</sup>

The most typical cult sign discovered at Zimbabwe is to be seen in the soapstone bird stelae, which we have already discussed, and which we have shown to be connected with Athar the goddess of the Sabaeans and patroness of gold-mining. Some of these, however, are doubly interesting as they are clearly phallic. This evidence would appear to identify the phallic symbol with the figure of the bird. Since the falcon is the sign of the god Horus, and he is a solar god, it is probable that the phallic principle of religion inferred here is that of a sun god.

There are comparable instances of the bird symbol in phallic form from the Old World, which should be mentioned to show that what we find at Zimbabwe forms part of a wider tradition than something merely located in Central Africa. Some of these have been found in the Seine, and at Nimes, in France.<sup>29</sup>

In the light of these facts, which, among other things, link the bird symbol with the concept of the falcon sun god, the discovery in the Transvaal of sun and moon symbols on rocks, and their occurrence on soapstone stelae at Zimbabwe just as they are found in the megalithic structures of the Old World, is not surprising. These symbols are not those of the Negro peoples, but they belong to the very peoples who had created the synthesis between the female and male godheads in the ancient world of Europe and the Near East.

However, we can be more specific than that. Besides Athar (Ishtar, Astarte, who is the same as Hathor) who is symbolised by Venus, Sabaean religion has two other principal deities. These are the sun-goddess, and the moon-god, (Shamsun and Sin respectively) whose symbols we find in Zimbabwe and the Transvaal.

Many more non-Bantu religious elements are to be traced in Rhodesia and associated with people who had connections with the Zimbabwean civilisation or with its survivors. The relevance of all these will have to be worked into a comprehensive synthesis to give us, some day, a more complete view of the religion of the Zimbabwean people. For instance, local tradition has it that before the coming of the Monomotapa there was a moon dynasty, and we have Pliny's reference to the Mountains of the Moon.<sup>x</sup> This links with the moon symbols and the moon-god, who in Saba was Sin or Iulumquh. Brentjes<sup>30</sup> sees a Zeus legend in Portuguese East Africa which would, again, take us back to the world of the White races, but what its horizon was will

\*Sir H. H. Johnston says the Arab Worship was symbolised by the Mahrab or Mihrab Shrine which is its oldest form, found in pre-Saracenic architecture in Eastern Syria, Western Mesopotamia, and Southern Tunisia, was little else than "a hallow male emblem." (*The Opening up of Africa*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1923, p.137.)

<sup>x</sup>The Egyptian god Min was associated with the Moon deity. As he was an ithyphallic god, we have here another link between the Moon and phallicism.



A stone stele with concentric circles on the wall of Milaboni's Kraal, Vendale, Northern Transvaal.

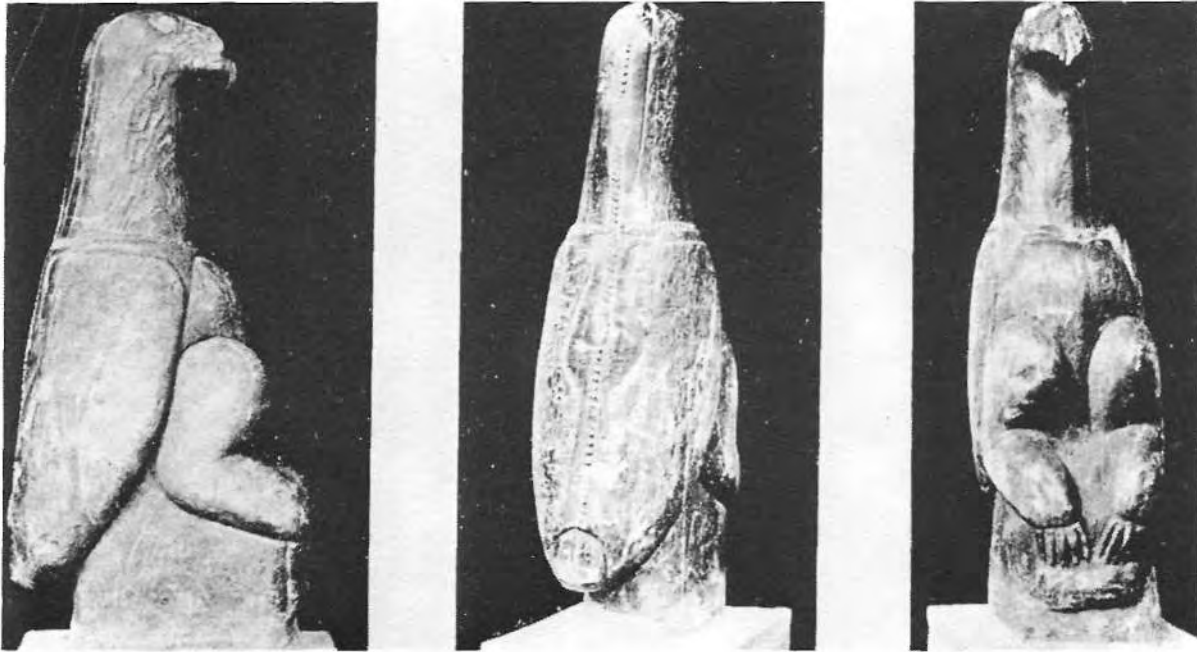
have to be ascertained. The legends of marriages of royal siblings among the Mambo is reminiscent of Egypt.<sup>31</sup> Once more, we are dealing with concepts which not only had no origin in Negroid Africa, but are northern in origin and mainly connected with south-west Arabia. The Sabaeen origin of Zimbabwe cannot be in any doubt, in the face of so many lines of enquiry all leading us back to this place of origin.

Another religious symbol which is found throughout the distribution of the megalithic civilisation is the spiral. Spirals are found at New Grange in Ireland, on the megalithic temples of Malta, in ancient Egypt, in prehistoric Mesopotamia, in Iran and Syria, as well as elsewhere.

A pair of spirals on a rock, such as might be found on any megalithic monument in Europe or the Near East, can be seen associated with the terrace culture at Inyanga,<sup>32</sup> which was the great agricultural development of the Zimbabwean civilisation. Rings of concentric circles are also found.\*

A characteristic which has religious association which is not associated with Negroid culture, but which has a clear parallel with some of the megaliths of Europe, is the otherwise puzzling feature that in these Rhodesian ruins no tombs are to be found. The only exceptions are those of Bantu which

\*Concentric rings are found in Europe associated with the delineation of the eyes of the Great Goddess, in association with the chevron pattern (which, in my opinion, undoubtedly represents the water of eternal life). We find the eyes in the face of the Mother Goddess in clay vessels of the Passage Grave Period represented by concentric circles. The religious "missions" which brought this motif to the north came from the Mediterranean, and particularly Malta and Gozo. Her symbols are found in Crete and the Aegean Islands, and are derived from the Middle East and Anatolia. (Glob, P. V. *Danish Prehistoric Monuments: Denmark, from the Stone Age to the Vikings*. London: Faber & Faber, 1967, figure 36. pp.97 & 98.) Thus we get an association of the concentric circles with the spirals within the same megalithic culture in the European-Mediterranean-Near Eastern province, just as we do in Rhodesia.



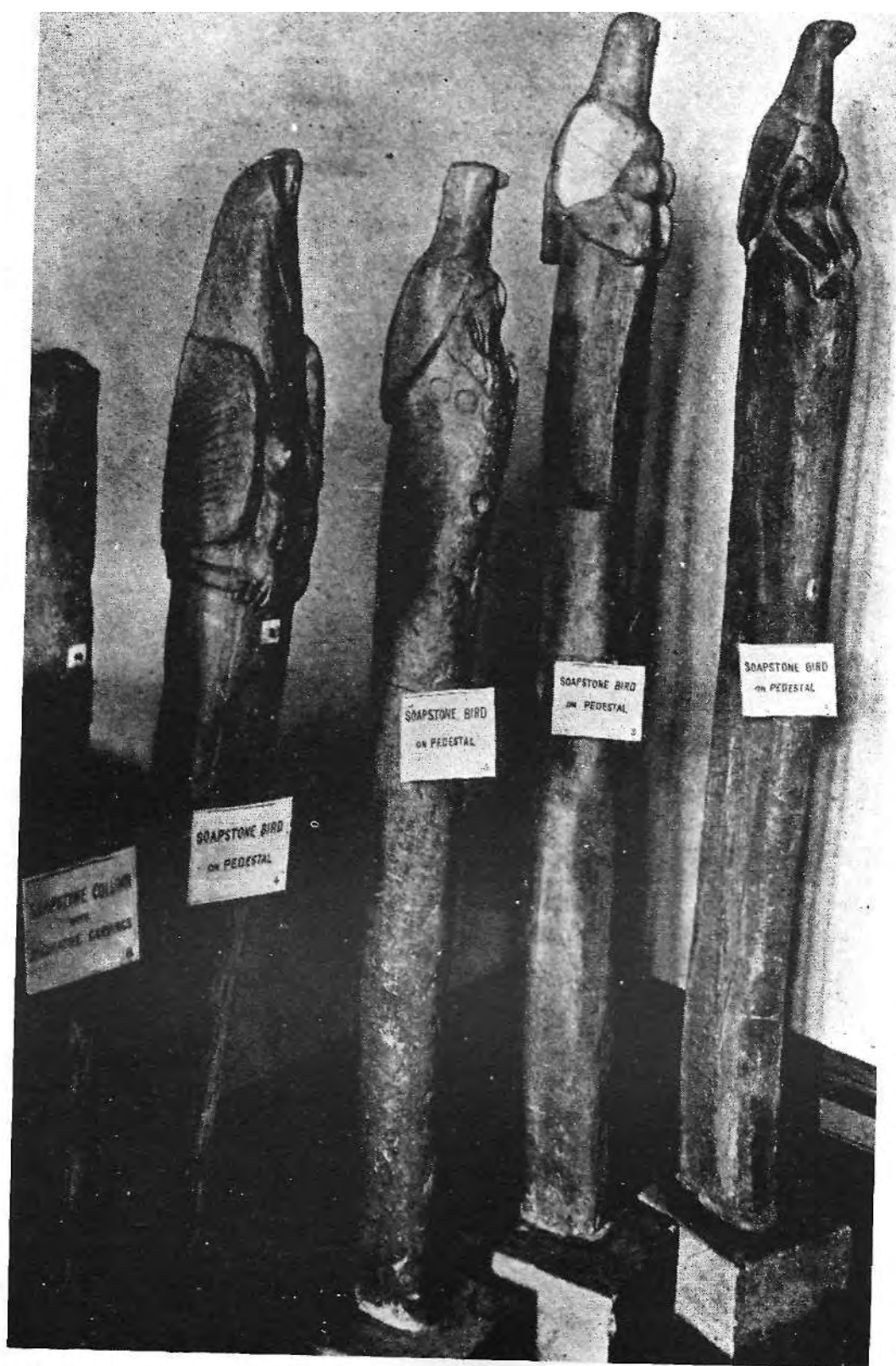
Carved soapstone birds.

Bent and others found burrowed into the ruins, obviously of a date later than the civilisation. This absence of normal burials of the builders has fortified Dr. Bruwer in his view that these buildings are Phoenician, since the burial places of that people are usually hidden away.<sup>33</sup>

However, this custom is not necessarily Phoenician. For instance, it seems to have been a feature of the megalithic civilisation of Malta. At the Hypogeum at Hal Safiieni there is a complete catacomb from which the remains of over seven thousand individuals have been recovered. These are late neolithic structures, of about 1500 B.C. at the latest. Thus one has the phenomenon of the lack of obviously discoverable burials on the one hand, with some form of collective entombment on the other. If the catacombs had not been discovered, then the absence of burials would have been a cause for surprise. This appears to be a European megalithic feature as well as a Phoenician.\*

Further light is thrown on the religion of Zimbabwe not only by the clearly Jewish traits in the religion of the Lemba and Venda peoples, but also in the name used for God by the Bantu Karanga of Rhodesia. The Karanga are the descendants of the people whom the Monomotapa ruled when the Arabs were still controlling the African east coast at the time the Portuguese arrived. This was an all-powerful and omniscient God, who in some ways resembled Jehovah, and was called Muari or Muali.<sup>34</sup>

\*It may be that the tendency of the early Christian cemeteries in Italy, Sicily, and Malta, to have large catacombs was a continuation of this custom of collective burial of the dead.



Bird stela from the walls of Zimbabwe.

Among those who have been sufficiently perceptive to see the relationship, it is usual to ascribe this god and his name to the Islamic Arabs—and look upon it as a variant of Allah. Since we have shown that the outside religious influence among the Lemba is Judaic, and not Islamic, there is no reason to look to Islam for the origin of Muari. Since in pre-Islamic, pre-Judaic, and pre-Christian Saba, as elsewhere in Arabia, the concept of the high God was given the name Ilu or Allah, it would seem that in Muari or Muali we have the same God. There were, of course, other deities, many of them female, such as the Three Cranes worshipped at Mecca, who were suppressed by Mahomet.

There is another fact which is important here, and that is, as Professor Hommel<sup>35</sup> has pointed out, Arabic tends to use Ilu (God), unless referring to a specific god, whereas Babylonian, and presumably many other Semitic languages, tend to use the name of the god. This is to be expected since it is among the Arabs that the most rigorous monotheism has evolved. Therefore the use of Muali makes the origin of the deity southern and not northern Semitic.

If there is a strong Sabaeen element in the creation of Zimbabwe, as we believe the cumulative effect of the evidence in this book indicates, then we should also expect to find some indication of the moon god in Rhodesia. This we certainly find in the moon symbol. Ancient Caucasoid religion tended to be international within the white nations as a whole. Therefore, the symbols found in one country could well have been used elsewhere. In Rhodesia (at Diana's Vow for instance) we find evidence of ibis-headed figures. In Egyptian religion this represents Thoth, the moon-god.<sup>36</sup> Since the moon-god Sin or Ilumquh was a principal deity among the Sabaeans, it may well be that in these ibis-headed figures we have a reference to him.

Therefore the occurrence of Muali, that is Ilu, for the name of God, with all these other traits of the falcon god, of a megalithic and phallic religion, circumcision, sun and moon deities, is wholly consistent with a corpus of religion coming originally from Saba, in Arabia, both from before the Judaizing of that state and before it was Christian. The later arrival of what were only partially Judaized Sabaeans added the Mosaic element, as found in the traditions of the Lemba, out of which, as so often happens, a synthesis of the two was made.

Of all the peoples of the ancient world, those who had the most complete and advanced system of terraced agriculture were the Sabaeans. Therefore finding the symbols of some of their principal deities associated with the type of works for which they were well-known is not without significance.

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## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

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4. *Ibid*, p.103.
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6. **Marinatos, Spyridon** *Crete and Mycenae*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1960, p.128.
7. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.ix, and p.xviii.
8. **Naville, Edouard** in: *Book of The Dead*. (A translation with commentary of the second and following) by P. le Page Renouf (continued by E. Naville). *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. 14-19, 1892.
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17. *Ibid*.
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20. *Ibid*. Citing: Zaborowski-Moindron, *Appareil phallique des ceremonies du mariage au Lagos*, B.M.S.A. 1, 1900.
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24. *Ibid*, p.196.
25. **Rachewiltz, Boris de**, *Black Eros*. . . . . , p.84.
26. *Numbers*, 25, v.3.
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## CHAPTER

# 14

## Islamic Influence

As WE HAVE already indicated, Mr. James E. Mullan identifies, in the cultural anthropology of some of the Bantu peoples, Islamic influences. In contrast, our view attributes Zimbabwe to pre-Islamic Arabs. For although we believe that the earlier settlements were pagan Arabic, the later ones, and in particular the large scale one in the sixth century, took place after the Sabaeans had become at least partly Judaized. Our interpretation of the facts, therefore, attributes the Zimbabwean civilisation to an earlier date and to a synthesis, in the end, of the religions of Athar, Shamsun, Sin, and Judaism. However, Mr. Mullan is not alone in having sought Islamic influence to explain the phenomena found among the Lemba. Thus Charles Bullock<sup>1</sup> takes up the same position when he suggests that they may have been derived from the "Moors", whom the Portuguese tell us they found living near Sofala.

These pro-Islamic views are less than satisfactory. They do not explain the characteristically Jewish traits which we have discussed and which go back to an earlier Arab phase than that of Islam; neither do they provide any vital interpretation of the other religious phenomena which we expounded and sought to interpret rationally in the previous chapter.

Common to the Semitic world was the concept of God—Il, El, Ilu, or Allah, (as we have already shown), which God had varying degrees of monotheism associated with Him. The fact that in Rhodesia there is among the Bantu some evidence of a monotheistic cult which is not generally shared by the Bantu everywhere is not without significance. This very concept is foreign to the Bantu, as is also that of the name of God as Mwari, Muari, or Muali, which is clearly no other than a corrupt form of Il, El, Ilu or Allah, the God of the Semitic peoples. Muali is associated with wind and high places which is a feature of the God of the Bible and of the Semites. Mr. Roger Summers admits, despite the pro-Bantu stance he has taken, that Muali or Mwari in many ways has Semitic connections.

While, therefore, Mr. Mullan and we share a common agreement in this connection, it is here that we have to disagree with him, since the cult of Muali does not prove an Islamic origin for this religion. As we have shown,



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Ilu or Allah is the name for the Supreme God belonging to the Semitic peoples, and it predates the adoption of Islam. In the light of the evidence we have given, it is our view that this name for the High God came unquestionably from pre-Islamic Sabaean Arabs.

Mr. Mullan, following the statement of Miss K. M. Kenyon in her appendix to Miss Caton-Thompson's book,<sup>2</sup> where she draws attention to the establishment of the sect of Zaid down the coast of East Africa, looks to this source to explain Zimbabwe.

He quotes the Arab writer Dimashqui as saying (*circa* 1320) that Madagascar had a "Negro Mohammedan population of the Zaidite and Shafite sects". Mr. Mullan<sup>3</sup> quotes Charles Bullock<sup>4</sup> who says that the BaLemba "still swear by Sayid (Zaid)".

Mr. Mullan conceives the theory that the sect of Zaid was persecuted in the Yemen and probably followed compatriots from the Yemen and Hadhramaut who had settled on the East African coast. He concludes that the Zaidites and the followers of Suleiman and Said would win over earlier Arab settlers to their religion, and these intruders coming into Rhodesia would make the terraces and raise the buildings and fortifications with Bushmen and Hottentot labour.<sup>5</sup>

He envisages the Suleiman and Said group as leaving Oman about 684 A.D. and the Zaidites (the Emozaid) as leaving the Yemen about 740 A.D. He brings the former into Rhodesia before 700 A.D. which seems to us, even on his theory, to be too late for them to have become a numerous population capable of building such vast works as those of Zimbabwe and Inyanga.

In a general sense Mr. Mullan is correct in saying that the immigrants were Arabs, and often Yemeni Arabs, who would find earlier Yemenis (Sabaean) already installed in the land, at least to some degree or another. The whole theory, however, breaks down, first because the dating by carbon-14 testing of the timber used in the construction of Zimbabwe is sufficiently early to make impossible an Islamic origin. The settlement in dating is pre-Islamic. An equally great objection is that there is no trace of a mosque in any of the erections of the Zimbabwean civilisation. Therefore we are not dealing with Moslems at all during the formative and creative stages of Zimbabwe.

On the basis of this evidence, we believe that Mr. Mullan's theory must be rejected. For by the time his Islamic Arabs could have come to settle in force in Rhodesia, it was several centuries too late.

On the other hand, his view of the conditions obtaining in Zimbabwe and Rhodesia, during the Moslem period on the coast of East Africa, may very well represent the facts. As we see it, we have in Rhodesia, in parts of Mozambique, and in the northern Transvaal, a pre-Islamic, partly Judaized, civilisation from Saba, with at first a Hottentot-Bushmen labour force, which was later supplemented by Bantu slaves from East Africa, including pre-Swahili Moslems, and perhaps later some Swahili Moslems.

Meanwhile, down the coast of East Africa, Islam had spread in all the Arabian, Persian and Indian colonies.\* Likewise, down this coast, Christian Ethiopian settlements had occurred.

Mr. Mullan refers to the veneration of the name Zaid (or Sajid) among the Lemba.<sup>6</sup> However, if the civilisation were Arab (Sabaean) the name Zaid proves nothing. There were many Zaid, and the ancestor of the Lemba could be any one of these, and not the founder of an heretical sect of Islam. That the Lemba also venerate Sadiki (Sadiq) and Sorenane (whom Mr. Mullan equates with Suleiman) does no more than emphasise the Arabic origin of the Lemba. For these are common Arab names.

Mr. Mullan draws attention to the Lemba greeting of *musoni* which he considers a corruption of *sunni*, the name used by Orthodox Moslems.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is only a conjecture. However, assuming this is derived from a Semitic word, as is possible, it does not specifically mean that it is derived from *sunni* as used by Moslem Arabs, as distinct from a word derived from pre-Islamic Arabs.

Mr. Mullan draws attention to the Arabian place name San'a in the Yemen, to Saiyun in the neighbouring Hadhramaut, and to Sena (formerly Seyuna of the Arabic writers) for the kingdom on the Zambezi.<sup>8</sup> This would prove an Arabic connection, but does not advance an Islamic Arabic claim.

Mr. Mullan believes that the Lemba are descended from the Arab Moslem Emozaid.<sup>9</sup> He puts forward the theory that they were the Abbalomba, derived from Abalaba meaning Aba-alaba, or Aba-Arab. He cites the river in Katanga called Lualaba meaning River of the Arabs. These interpretations may well be correct, in view of the Lemba connection with Zimbabwe, their Mosaic Code, and their claim to be of White descent.<sup>x</sup> The probabilities are in support of his view. All this would prove Arab descent. But it does not prove *Islamic* Arab descent, which is the point he is attempting to establish.

Mr. Mullan<sup>10</sup> also equates the Katanga term *Musendji* (plural *Basendji*), a term of contempt for members of another race, with the Arabic word Zenj for heathen. As the Katangans were under Arab influence this is very likely.

The word for God given by Idrisi (1100-1166) as used in the furthest southern dependency of the Zenj or Zanj (Mozambique-Rhodesia region), is Errohim. We are entirely with Mr. Mullan<sup>11</sup> in seeing in this the Hebrew name for God, Elohim.<sup>+</sup> The Arabic equivalent in Egypt is Allahi, and the Somali is Ilahay. However, these are further away in form than Elohim. Consequently, the occurrence of this name among the Zenj in Mozambique in the twelfth century does not indicate Islamic influence, but it confirms

\*These colonies on the coast of East Africa, from the inferences which we can derive from the fifteenth century, appear to have contained *Hindu* Indian settlements, apart from *Islamic* Indian.

<sup>x</sup>The Lemba are sometimes called Ba-Lungu by other Bantu. This name means "White People" or "White Man".

<sup>+</sup>The letters R and L are interchangeable in phonetic law.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

the Hebrew penetration of these people. By this time these people were Swahili Moslems, as are the descendants of the East Coast Zanj today. Nevertheless, their Islamic faith must have been built upon an earlier Semitic religion in the Arab towns down the East African coast, and that must have been some Judaized form of religion, since it transmitted into the Islamic phase the name for God in its Hebrew rather than in its Arabic form.

All this is consistent with the evidence that the Zimbabwean civilisation was created by Sabaean settlers ranging from the pagan period in the Yemen until that region of South-West Arabia became Judaized.

A further consideration which should be taken into account is that once Islam had established itself on the coast, it would be a long time before it could have made any inroads upon the religions of the peoples of the interior, if what happened elsewhere in similar circumstances is any guide. Furthermore, against a pre-Islamic pagan synthesis with Judaism, any missionary effort would have faced enormous resistance compared with what the primitive Bantu religions would have put up if they alone had been involved. For instance, it took until the fourteenth century before Islam was beginning to be fully established in Malacca and Java on the other side of the Indian Ocean.<sup>12</sup> There it was faced with the opposition of Hinduism which it ultimately ousted and forced to seek refuge in Bali where it still survives.

Therefore, it does not seem likely that Islam could possibly have established itself at Zimbabwe in the formative stage of the civilisation and at its heyday. At the best Islam's influence could only have been felt very late. Even then it does not seem to have been tolerated openly, as there is no sign of a mosque in any of the Rhodesian ruins—and nowhere is Islam found without one.

1. **Bullock, Charles** *The Mashona and the Matabele*. Cape Town: Juta 1927.
2. **Thompson, G. Caton** *The Zimbabwe Culture*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931, Appendix by K. M. Kenyon.
3. **Mullan, James E.** *The Arab Builders of Zimbabwe*. Salisbury, Rhodesia: James E. Mullan, 1969, p.11.
4. **Bullock**, *The Mashona*. . . . .
5. **Mullan**, *The Arab Builders*. . . . . , p.12.
6. *Ibid.* p.19.
7. *Ibid.* p.19.
8. *Ibid.* p.28.
9. *Ibid.* p.45.
10. *Ibid.* p.45.
11. *Ibid.* p.50.
12. **Ruhlmann**, Georges Expansion of Islam, in: *Larousse Encyclopaedia of Ancient and Mediaeval History*. London: The Companion Book Club, 1965, p.396.

## CHAPTER

## 15

The Ethnology  
of Zingian Africa

THUS FAR we have been content to treat the normal identification of the Zing, Zinj, Zang, Zenj, with the Bantu as though it were correct, in order not to introduce a diversion from our main argument. Until now we could air points without raising that issue at all. We have now reached the stage at which greater ethnological precision of identification is necessary if we are to reconstruct the racial prehistory of the coastlands of East Africa.

A. H. Keane, writing years ago said:

"From the earliest times of which there is any authentic record the whole of the seaboard from the Somal coast to an unknown distance southwards was comprised within the dominions of the Zenj (Zang) potentates who for centuries claimed and vindicated the title of 'sovereign of the sea.' From them the seaboard itself took the name of Zanguebar (Zanzibar), the Balid-ez-Zenj, or 'Land of the Zenj;' of the Arabs, a term which thus corresponds to the Hindu-bar, or 'land of the Hindu', formerly applied to the west coast of India."<sup>1</sup>

Zanzibar, which was known and settled early by the Arabs, thus takes its name from the Zenj. Since this term extended as far north as Somalia, we are reaching regions where the Negroid peoples were never settled at any time and where they were not indigenous.

This is clear evidence that the term did not originally apply to the Bantu, or Negroid people at all.

It would be easier to see this term as indicating for the Arabs some alien, probably despised, local inhabitants of the coast of East Africa. It would have much the same connotation ultimately as their other word Kaffir had, meaning pagan, even if at first it was that of a distinct local racial group first met by them as they turned the Horn of Africa in their explorations southward. In that case it would seem to have belonged to some Cushitic group. The use of the term for the inhabitants of Mogadishu (in Somalia) in the north to Zanzibar, would seem to confirm the view that it was one used for the Cushitic peoples. Before the expansion of the Bantu towards the coast, the Cushitic peoples, or those who were a mixture of

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Cushitic-Hottentot, probably stretched as far south as this. The Cushitics are a dark-to-black people, with frizzy hair (not short and woolly like that of the Negroes), tall stature, and otherwise (such as in facial features) Hamitic in type. They are part of the same stock which forms the basis of the population of Ethiopia and Somalia to this day. This is probably a hybrid originally between Caucasoid and Australoid, with, as time passed, frequent injections of Caucasoid from North Africa and Arabia, until, in the latter period of its racial history, it began to receive an infiltration of some Negroid elements from slave contacts.

By the tenth century A.D. the term Zenj was being applied to peoples as far south as Sofala, and therefore south of the Zambezi, according to the Arab writer Masoudi (*circa* 947). It does not follow, however, that these were ethnically the same as the Zenj further north on the borders of Somalia. By the tenth century the Bantu had begun their movement to the coast of East Africa and southwards, and Zenj might well by this time have comprehended Bantu as well as Cushitic peoples. They were both dark, and as the Bantu entered Kenya and Tanganyika and intermingled with the original Zenj (to create the later Swahili Moslems with an Arab admixture) there would be established a transition from the older type of Zenj to the newer.

Our reconstruction of the racial history is that Arabs had settled on these coasts from the earliest times. Here they found only dark-skinned Cushitic peoples (since before about the fourth century A.D. there were few, if any, Bantu on the coast of East Africa). Crosses took place between the ruling Arab and the Cushitic Zenj peoples. This term may, therefore, have referred to both the Cushitic and the cross-bred people.

*The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which was a "pilot" or seaman's guide, of the beginning of the second century (110 A.D), confirms this. The book, in Greek, sets out to be a guide to the Red Sea (hence Erythrean) but then it extends its range to the East Coast of Africa to a place as far south as Rhapta, which may have been a port lying between Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam, immediately opposite Zanzibar. In addition, the book has references to the Indian trade, which had undoubtedly existed for centuries before its time. The southern part of these lands of the Zenj (which is now the Somali, Kenyan, and Tanganyikan seaboard) was called Azania. This country imported weapons and tools of all kinds, as well as glass, and some wheat and wine. In return the ships collected gold, ivory (including rhinoceros horn for its alleged medicinal uses), palm oil, tortoise shell, and the like.

The people of this coast are described as being of tall stature. Margaret Shinnie<sup>2</sup> points out that nowhere does the *Periplus* tell us that the people were black or dark-skinned. However, the explanation is surely that, as they were in appearance the same as the peoples from Nubia to Eritrea, and on to the Horn of Africa, it was, as far as the author was concerned, superfluous to mention their dark colour. The tall stature is, of course, consistent with a Cushitic people's appearance. He also informs us that they were under their own chiefs and of piratical habit. This last character is

not true of the Bantu who have never been seamen in the first place, and so could not, as a result, take to piracy.

What the writer of the *Periplus* does tell us is of importance as an indication of how, later, the Swahili Moslems arose. He informs us that the Arab captains and agents were familiar with the people of this coast, knew their language, and intermarried with them. Thus we can conclude that a Semito-Hamitic cultural group was arising in the various ports, with cross-bred Caucasoid-Cushitic stock as the physical type.

Claudius Ptolemy, writing later in the second century, but whose work was edited in the fourth century and whose conditions it probably reflects, describes a dark-skinned people which existed to about as far south as the boundaries of Mozambique. Modern writers, thereupon, jump to the conclusion that this must be due to the Bantu who had moved into this coastal strip as early as this date—and so the myth of an early Bantu settlement in Central and Southern Africa is given material assistance.

There are grounds for concluding that it is most unlikely that the Bantu could possibly have arrived there by that time. Ptolemy's account gives no reason to believe that his finding black people all along the coast of Tanganyika supports the Bantu theory of settlement there by this time. We have seen that the only reasonable conclusion is that the Zenj of the time of the *Periplus* were Cushitic peoples, and that they were then to be found as far south as Dar-es-Salaam. All that Ptolemy's account is telling us is that, by his day (or at the latest by the fourth century), the black Zenj had extended as far south as the boundaries of the present Tanganyikan seaboard.

By the time of Masudi (tenth century) we learn that black people were settled as far south as Mozambique. These might well have been partly Bantu, but Bantu who had been absorbed into the already settled Zenj population. If there had been an abrupt overthrow of the original Zenj the Arabs would have felt the impact of it on their trading relations, and they could not have gone on using this name for the coastal peoples.

It seems that the most reasonable explanation is that the Zenj population became very gradually Bantuized. There is no evidence that the Cushitics have ever had to collapse before the Bantu. Always, in their contacts, the Somalis, Galla, and other Cushitics, have enslaved the Negro. It is a fair supposition that the Zenj and Arabs between them enslaved the Bantu and produced from the three stocks a later Zenj population which was becoming progressively more Negro and more Caucasoid Arab at the expense of the Cushitics (who were the true Zenj). Under this evolution the Swahili Moslem arose.

Consequently, whereas the early Zenj were Cushitic-Arab crosses, the later Zenj were mainly a Bantu-Arab mixture, the Cushitic element being clearly of much less importance in the matrix. Since the Bantuisation would start in the north (Kenya and Tanganyika) there would be a transition from that type to the earlier Zenj strain which would still be surviving in the south.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

That there was a difference between the northern and southern Zanj is confirmed by the statement of Masudi that the western part of the Indian Ocean began with Aden and ended with the land of the Zanj, whose people were different from the Zanj he knew.

It may be that the Zanj slaves who were in huge numbers in lower Irak by the ninth century A.D. were of this mixed Cushitic-Bantu stock. These slaves were so many that they were able to stage what was for a time a successful revolt in 869 A.D., until their fortress of Al-Mukhtara was destroyed in 883 A.D. How numerous they were is indicated by the fact that it is said that half a million were put to death.<sup>3</sup> Another thing which this event indicates is that the communications with East Africa must have been frequent and close.


The movements and ethnic changes which we have noted so far as they affected the Zanj, had their repercussions elsewhere. The expansion of the Cushites, and then the Bantu, to the south, set in motion a general movement southwards. This meant that pressure was brought to bear more and more on the Cappoids. As we see them, the Cappoids were hunting folk, of whom the surviving remnants are the Bushmen and those who had already become crossed with Hamito-Cushitic peoples, giving rise to the Hottentots. From the Cushitic the Hottentots have derived the Hamitic elements in their language, their tall stature, and their pastoralist cattle economy.

Thus the ethnic divisions which existed in East Africa in the first millennium A.D. can be arrived at. The mobile Cushitic peoples, under considerable direct Arabic influence from Arabia, or indirectly from Ethiopia, spread southwards. On the coast they were the Zanj. These in their turn over-ran the northern Cappoids, out of whom were created the Hottentots, some of whose blood they absorbed. The rest they pushed before them to the south. The Hottentots in their turn pushed the Bushmen before them southwards.

Later the Bantu expanded from the Sudan and the Northern Congo. They were contained by the Cushitic and Semitic peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia, and by the Arabo-Cushitic Zanj along the seaboard, and were forced to turn towards the south, moving down the overland routes towards southern Africa. In the course of this expansion they became, in places, mixed with the Zanj, and out of this mixture arose the Swahili Moslems. They must also have overrun some of the pastoral Hottentots who were a Cushitic-Cappoid cross. Thus was absorbed the tawny skin and the Hottentot clicks by the Bantu, and as a result, as they moved southwards, they became less and less Negroid, until, as in parts of South Africa today, the degree of Cappoid blood in the Bantu is astoundingly high.

The type of Zanj found by Masoudi (947 A.D.) near Sofala would, therefore, be racially very mixed. It would be largely what we now call Swahili Moslem except that at that location it probably had some Hottentot elements and, at that stage in time, had still some perceptible old Zanj elements of Cushitic-Arab type. By this time they had sufficient Negro blood, especially in some individuals by genetic segregation, for this Arab writer to





33.167

Above: Examples of gold-plating at Mapungubwe.

Inside left: A gold bowl found at Mapungubwe.

Inside right: Gold-plated rhinoceros found at the ancient burial site of Mapungubwe.  
Northern Transvaal.















describe them as black men with hanging lips, and with a fear of ancestral spirits—which is a belief typical of the Negro. Nevertheless we suspect that there must have been a perceptible Hottentot-Cappoid strain among them. As we have indicated, we consider the Hottentot was a cross between the Cushitic and Cappoid (Bushman) type. We know that this Hottentot or proto-Hottentot type was an integral part of the Zenj at this time, if only because Masoudi tells us that the Zenj used oxen not only for beasts of burden but also for war. These animals were harnessed like horses and were ridden as fast. When the Europeans arrived in South Africa they found that the Hottentots harnessed and rode oxen. Therefore, it is certain Masoudi was describing a people in whom what we may now call Hottentot was a significant element.

However, it should be stressed that these Mozambique Zenj would be much more typical of the northern coastal Swahili than of the inland Bantu. They would, indeed, not be a Bantu nation as such. On the contrary they would still remain Zenj (Cushitic-Hottentot-Arab) in their own estimation of themselves, although they had now become mixed with Bantu and largely Bantuized, both racially and culturally. Both Cushitic and Bantu elements would give nigrescence in these people and some of them would be thick-lipped (from Bantu admixture), but they would no doubt consider themselves different from the Bantu in degree of civilisation and social order, and no doubt looked down upon them.

Further north this mixed type produced the Swahili Moslem. In so far as there would be a constant drift southwards of the same stock (sometimes as slaves), now Islamized and so true Swahili Moslems, Islamic conversions would be effected all the time by the Arabs of Sofala in Mozambique. Thus these southern Zenj would be in process of becoming another variant of what today we call Swahili Moslems. Later on, in the second millennium A.D., when the pent-up pressure of the Bantu smashed its destructive course across the Zambezi and the Limpopo, these Zenj were largely swept away, destroyed, or absorbed. But at the time at which Masudi wrote this had not yet happened. Therefore, we are of the opinion that the term Zenj does not connote Negroid Bantu, but, originally, black Cushitic peoples in part crossed with Hottentot, and only later, as they became Bantuized, would they become Bantu. However, they would be a distinct people, just as are the Swahili Moslems further north, and so not strictly a part of the ethnic structure of the Bantu nations.

This view appears to be confirmed by the fact that in the time of Masudi (947 A.D.) the Zenj remembered clearly their northern origin. Masudi tells us that some of them came from Abyssinia. This links the Zenj with Cushitic stock which we have shown must have been the ethnic basis of the Zenj of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy.

We should not, however, overlook the fact that, in addition to any such Ethiopian elements, we know that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were actual Christian Ethiopians living in the Arab towns of East Africa. Thus it is clear that from as early as the time of Masudi, and before,

Left: Glass beads, thin sheets of gold and various relics found at Zimbabwe.

there were Semitic or Hamitic Ethiopians among the Zenj. The fact of the matter is that the coast of East Africa was not some backwater. Peoples from all the Indian Ocean lands were in contact with it. Just as there were not only Indian sailors in the ports but also Indian settlers, so, in addition to the all dominant Arabs, there were also Ethiopians.

Although we envisage much the same ethnic relationships in the south as further north, the results were not, in the end, identical. When, ultimately, the Bantu overran the Zimbabwean lands of Rhodesia (probably between the tenth and the twelfth century) the same pattern of relationship between coast and Bantu hinterland developed. The coastal Arab influence and power at Sena and Sofala was much the same then as at Mombasa and Malindi in the north, and for a time there was a hybrid Islamized population. But this did not survive the final crash of Zimbabwe, and what would have been a Swahili Moslem stock was completely absorbed or destroyed by the invading Bantu peoples.

This then is the broad ethnological position as we see it, as it developed during the first millennium and into the second. Now we will turn back and attempt to follow so far as we can the historical statements as they occurred of the Arab and other chronicles from the time of the *Periplus* onwards. These will fill in some of the information necessary to understand the ethnology which we have described.

Agathudes of Alexandria (150 B.C.) tells us that East Africa was under the influence of the peoples of the Yemen when he writes:

"No nations in the world are so wealthy as the Gerrhaens and Sabaeans, for they were placed in the centre of all the commerce which passes between Asia and Africa."<sup>4</sup>

Thus, whatever visits, trade, and settlements had already occurred on the coast of East Africa, we know that it was under Arab influence from before 150 B.C., and that these were pre-Islamic Yemeni Arabs.

Next, when we come to the first century *Periplus*, we are told of East Africa that: "It is not subject to a King but each market town is ruled over by a separate chief." These were independent of each other, but some were "subject to the Himyarite princes of Southern Arabia." Here we see a clear dependence on south-west Arabia.

Masoudi says that the Zenj, in Mozambique near Sofala, were ruled by an elected king called Waqlimi, the name meaning the Son of the Supreme Lord, and they worshipped God by the name of Moklandjalou. The name of their king was from time immemorial, and he was supreme over all the other kings of the Zenj.

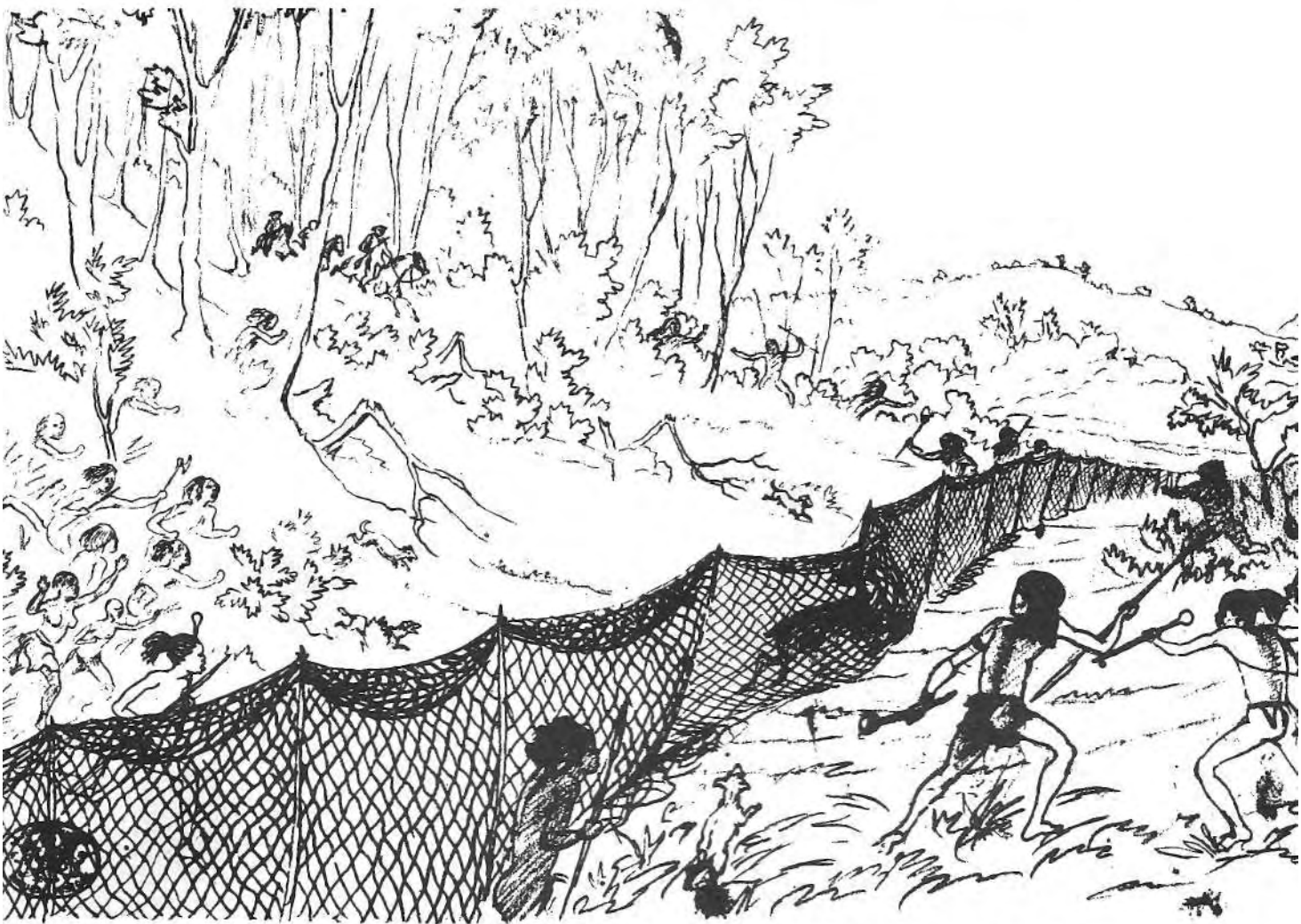
Mr. Mullan derived this name Waqlimi from the seSotho *Morwa wa ka Limi*, which became corrupted in the Arabic to *Waqlimi*, and which would have had the same meaning, bearing in mind that Mulimi is the name for God among the Sotho peoples. However, as Mr. Mullan admits, this is not an entirely satisfactory interpretation when we bear in mind that Masoudi tells us that the Zenj had the name Maklandjalou for Sovereign Master, God. This is suspiciously like the Zulu for God which is Mkulunkulu. From

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

this he concludes, we believe quite correctly, that *Limi*, has the appearance of a foreign word.<sup>5</sup>

The very fact that *Limi* does not appear to be Bantu, even if it can tortuously be shown to survive among the Sotho as a subsidiary name for God, confirms the fact that the Zenj were not originally Bantu, and were only so in the end because they had absorbed Bantu blood. Surely this word *Limi* for God is a corruption of the Sabaean *Ilu* for God, whatever other addition has been made to it either in *Limi* or *Waqlimi*. Incidentally, it might be pointed out that the Zulu people have very strong traces of Cushitic blood, and so it is not surprising that their language has a word for God which appears to be similar to that used in Masoudi's day by the Zenj in Mozambique.

Drawing made in the Umfuli district in 1870, by Thomas Baines, showing long-haired maShona hunting, confirming some admixture of non-Negroid genes.



maShona-hunting game with stake nets - (catching a Quail) near Mt Wood's camp. Mozambique hills. Sept 10-1870.

Baines



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

The next Arab chronicler who is of assistance to us is Idrisi, the geographer (1100-1166 A.D.). He tells us that there is a large town of the Zenj called Malindi which was 150 miles north of El-Banes, the last dependency of the Zenj adjoining Sofala, "in the land of gold." This can hardly be the Arab town of Malindi, north of Mombasa. Idrisi was a geographer and could scarcely have made such a mistake. These coasts and seas were well-known to him and his contemporaries, as they had been to his predecessors for a thousand or more years. We believe that Mr. Mullan's identification of this Malindi with Lindi (south of Kilwa, in Tanganyika) is correct,<sup>6</sup> if the name is not better represented by such a name as Mulambe which is about 150 miles north of Sofala.

We are told by the same writer that the Arab state of Sofala had two market towns (Djentama and Dendema) and Siouna which was peopled by Indians, Zenj, and others. From this it is clear that the Arabs were living in close proximity to the Zenj, as they did to the Swahili further north, while their trade was sufficient to attract Indians and others to live among them. Siouna might well be Sena, inland on the Zambezi, to which the dhows no doubt came. If so it was probably a centre for the export of gold from Rhodesia.

Idrisi explains for us the obvious Malay element which is to be found in Madagascar, and the numerous cultural traits of Indonesian origin, such as the multihull type of fishing vessel to be seen on the East African coast. For he tells us that the peoples of the Isles of Zabag, which we may assume are the Indonesian islands, came to the country of the Zenj in both large and small ships. Trade took place between them and the Zenj, whose language they understood. This implies that they had settlers in these parts of East Africa and so for this reason communication was not difficult for them.

That this statement is a reflection of the actual realities which existed at that time is demonstrated by the fact that it can now be shown that there is a similarity between the Malagasy languages and the Maayan tongue spoken in southern central Borneo.<sup>7</sup>

According to Idrisi the Zenj inhabitants of El-Banes, their most southerly town, worshipped a one-sided drum called Errohim, which word we have already discussed as being derived from Elohim. Possibly it is in this word, as well as in the El of El-Banes, that we see the Hebrew influence which we believe is to be associated with the Zimbabwean culture beyond these lands of the Zenj. Such a culture could not help influencing a neighbouring and lower one, while that of the Zenj must at times have been influenced by Hebrew culture through cross-breeding with Arabs at the period when the Sabaeans had espoused Judaism, before they became Moslems.

We are inclined to believe that originally, from the coast through to Rhodesia, the only influence, other than that of the indigenous Hottentots and Bushmen, was that of Judaized Arabs. During this period not only were the Bantu pressing southward, but the Zenj were being introduced down the coast, until much of the population of Mozambique and Rhodesia became Zenj, with more and more admixture of Bantu as time went on. Therefore,

so far as the southern Zenj are concerned, whether in Mozambique or Rhodesia, we would expect underlying Jewish religious traits to exist, and, indeed, even to survive the later Moslem influence, which must have become powerful in the towns of the Arabs themselves.

Mr. Mullan (as we have already shown) holds that the name for the Son of the Supreme Lord (God) was *Morwa ka Elohim*, which gave the name for the king of the Zenj in Arabic as Waqlimi in the time of Masoudi (947 A.D.). Now in the time of Idrisi (1100-1166 A.D.) we are told of the Supreme God Errohim (Elohim) among the same people.

By the time we come to the next Arab writer, Dimashqui (1256-1327 A.D.), we are told that the king's name is now Touklim. Using seSotho to interpret this, Mr. Mullan arrives at Tau Ka Elohim which he translates as Lion of the Great God.<sup>8</sup> He draws attention to the fact that Bantu chiefs are often called Lion. It is our view that, between the time of Idrisi and Dimashqui, the Zenj had ceased to be a Cushitic-Hottentot-Arab cross with some perceptible Bantu admixture still dominated by the Zenj foundations, and had now become largely Bantu with Zenj racial elements absorbed into them. From this time onwards the Bantu peoples, one after another, entered the land of Mozambique, and probably Rhodesia, absorbing the native populations of Bantuised Zenj and destroying Hottentot and Bushmen elements.

Nevertheless, so far as the Arabs are concerned, it must be realised that the whole coast, from the borders of Somalia to Mozambique, was the land of the Zenj, and so they would still go on calling its inhabitants Zenj despite quite big ethnic and linguistic changes in their composition. This is normal. The people of Great Britain are still given the name of Britons long after most of the inhabitants have ceased to be Welsh Britons, although some of the latter's blood permeates that of their successors and supplanters.

More or less contemporary with Dimashqui (1256-1327 A.D.) we find another Arab, Abu-al-Fida (1273-1331 A.D.), writing from Mombasa, where, he tells us, lived the paramount Sheik of the Zenj. This can only be interpreted as meaning that the whole of the Zenj coast, from Somalia to Sofala, was under the suzerainty of the Sultan or Sheik of Mombasa. He, no doubt, exercised similar authority over the Arabs in all the coastal towns and enclaves. This does not mean that Bantu tribes and peoples in the interior, or the people of Rhodesia lying outside the lands of the Zenj, would be under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Mombasa.

Abu-al-Fida, citing Ibn Zaid, tells us that the Arab ships sailed up a great river for 300 miles; this must be a reference to the Zambezi, on which is Sena, which was the capital of the territory. Between the land of the Zenj and the river on its eastern side was a desert. Sofala lay on the western side. Besides Sena, there was another town called Leyrana and the people of these parts were employed in gold and iron-mining.

When we come to Ibn Batuta (1350 A.D.), writing a generation later, we get more information reflecting a position which would appear to have developed beyond that which existed in the time of Dimashqui and Abu-al-Fida. Ibn Batuta received his information from a merchant of Kilwa, one

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

of the big Arab centres on the east coast, and it is probable that this is giving conditions as they related to the period from about 1300 to 1325 A.D.

According to Ibn Batuta's account, gold dust was brought from a town and land called Yufi, in the country of the Limis, a month's journey from the port whence it was shipped. The town of Yufi was governed by a ruler who held sway with considerable power. It could never be visited by Arabs (called white men in the account) for they would be killed by the native people.

If we accept Mr. Mullan's reasonable equation of *Waqlima* with *Errohim*, with *Elohim*, with *Touklm*, then this name of *Limi* associated with Yufi belongs to the same origin. Furthermore, whereas before, the land of the Zenj, associated with the rulers who had the name of the Supreme Lord in their titles, lay abutting upon Sofala, the land of gold, it is now clear that the land of the Limi is out beyond it.

This land of Limi, with its centre at Yufi, which had a people hostile to the Islamic Arabs of the coast, is said to have been a month's journey from the coast. This is the same distance that was involved from Sofala to Mazofe (which Mr. Mullan suggests is Yufi<sup>9</sup>) when d'Alcacova, the Portuguese writer, reported upon the journey.

We suggest that the explanation of this shift to the west of the land of the Zenj is due to the evolving racial amalgam, and the associated cultural phenomena which were taking place.

The southernmost Zenj had received a clear imprint from the pre-Islamic Jewish Arabs who were dependent on their Zimbabwean civilisation and its trade, before Islam had any influence in Sofala at all. There was, therefore, a cultural and religious *continuum* from the Zenj territories in Mozambique to the lands of the Judaized pagan Arabs in Rhodesia.

It is doubtful if the black people encountered by Vasco da Gama (1498), at the mouth of the Limpopo, were in fact Bantu or substantially Bantu. His description of them and of their chief leaves an impression of a tall people, in some of whose features there appear to be traits which are non-Negroid. There is a strong presumption of a major element in them of Cushitic type, and in that case they were rather Zenj than Bantu. Since the Bantu intermixture on the East African coast had spread southwards gradually, the statement of Idrisi is consistent with this fact.

It is significant that these inhabitants of the Limpopo region, in the time of Vasco da Gama, could understand only a little of what the Portuguese interpreter said to them. Presumably he spoke one of the Bantu or semi-Bantu languages of the west coast. The Portuguese found that an abundance of copper was to be obtained in the Limpopo region. This suggests that if the natives did not work the mines themselves, they were in trading contact with the Lemba who are credited with having worked the Messina copper mines and who were a residual people of the Zimbabwean civilisation who, we have shown, were of White, Sabaeen, origin.

As time passed, the Arabs in Rhodesia became more and more mixed, first with Hottentot and Bushmen, then with Zenj (Cushitic-Hottentot),

and later with Bantu elements. The result of this would be that, as far as the masses in Zimbabwe were concerned, they were as much "native" (that is Zenj) to the Arabs by the fourteenth century A.D. as were the Zenj proper.

Therefore Ibn Batuta, recording greater knowledge from his Kilwa merchant than his predecessors give us, tells us for the first time about the rulers of the Zimbabwean civilisation who by then had either gone "native", or were ruling over a people who had become virtually "native", in the Zenj sense. The dominant element was largely a black-to-brown people, but with a high degree of Caucasoid features inherited from their Semitic and Hamitic ancestors. Some Bantu blood had undoubtedly been introduced by this time, partly from slaves brought down the coast, and partly from groups of Bantu which had crossed the Zambezi and had settled in Rhodesia, thereby having seriously disrupted its original civilisation which, under these stresses, was so shaken that it was almost brought to the ground. Having a combination of pagan and Jewish beliefs, and now genetically so racially mixed that they were as black as the original Zenj, this amalgam was antagonistic to the Islamic Arabs. These Arabs were perceptibly White Caucasoids, fanatically attached to their religion, and had all the export and import trade in their hands. All these factors were enough to develop intense antagonism against these merchant venturers.

These differences, making contact difficult, we see at their starkest in the fourteenth century A.D. They must have been developing, however, over several centuries, and would account for the lack of a common detailed knowledge of the Zimbabwean civilisation among the Islamic coastal Arabs when they had extended their sway to Mozambique.

That gold was still being exported from Rhodesia is clear, and the intermediaries were probably the coastal Zenj proper, who were subjects of the same rulers in Mombasa as the Arabs themselves. Therefore, the gold probably passed through three sets of hands on its way to the coast. First there were the miners in Zimbabwe (by origin at least nominally of pagan and Judaized Arab extraction, with some Abyssinian and earlier elements), the Zenj, and finally the Islamic Arabs of the coastal ports and colonies.

It should be realised that before the whole of the Zimbabwean civilisation was swept away, and with it the remnant of the Zenj or by now Zenj-like masters of Zimbabwe rather than Sabaean Arabs, there must have been a chaotic period. During this period the Bantu would hold large sections of the land, with raids and counter-attacks taking place between both stocks. During this time some imports and exports would continue until only the Bantu survived as the lords of the land, with the megalithic civilisation destroyed and its people extinguished except so far as some of their blood survived in Bantuised, Zenj-like, peoples such as the Lemba and others.

We believe that this last phase of Zimbabwe had arrived by about the fourteenth century A.D. This was when the collapse of the Zimbabwean civilisation of Rhodesia was taking place.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

1. **Keane, A. H.** Zanzibar, in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed. Edinburgh: Black, 1888, vol. 24, p.768.
2. **Shinnie, Margaret** *Ancient African Kingdoms*. London: Edward Arnold, 1965, p.104.
3. **Grenville, G. S. P. Freeman-** *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, p.34.
4. **Mullan, James E.** *The Arab Builders of Zimbabwe*. Salisbury, Rhodesia: James E. Mullan, 1969, p.34.
5. *Ibid.* p.49.
6. *Ibid.* p.38.
7. **Murdock, G. P.** *Africa: its people and their culture history*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, p.209.
8. **Mullan, James E.** *The Arab Builders*. . . . . , p.50.
9. *Ibid.* p.41.

## CHAPTER

## 16

Rhodesian Gold  
Extraction  
in Ancient Times

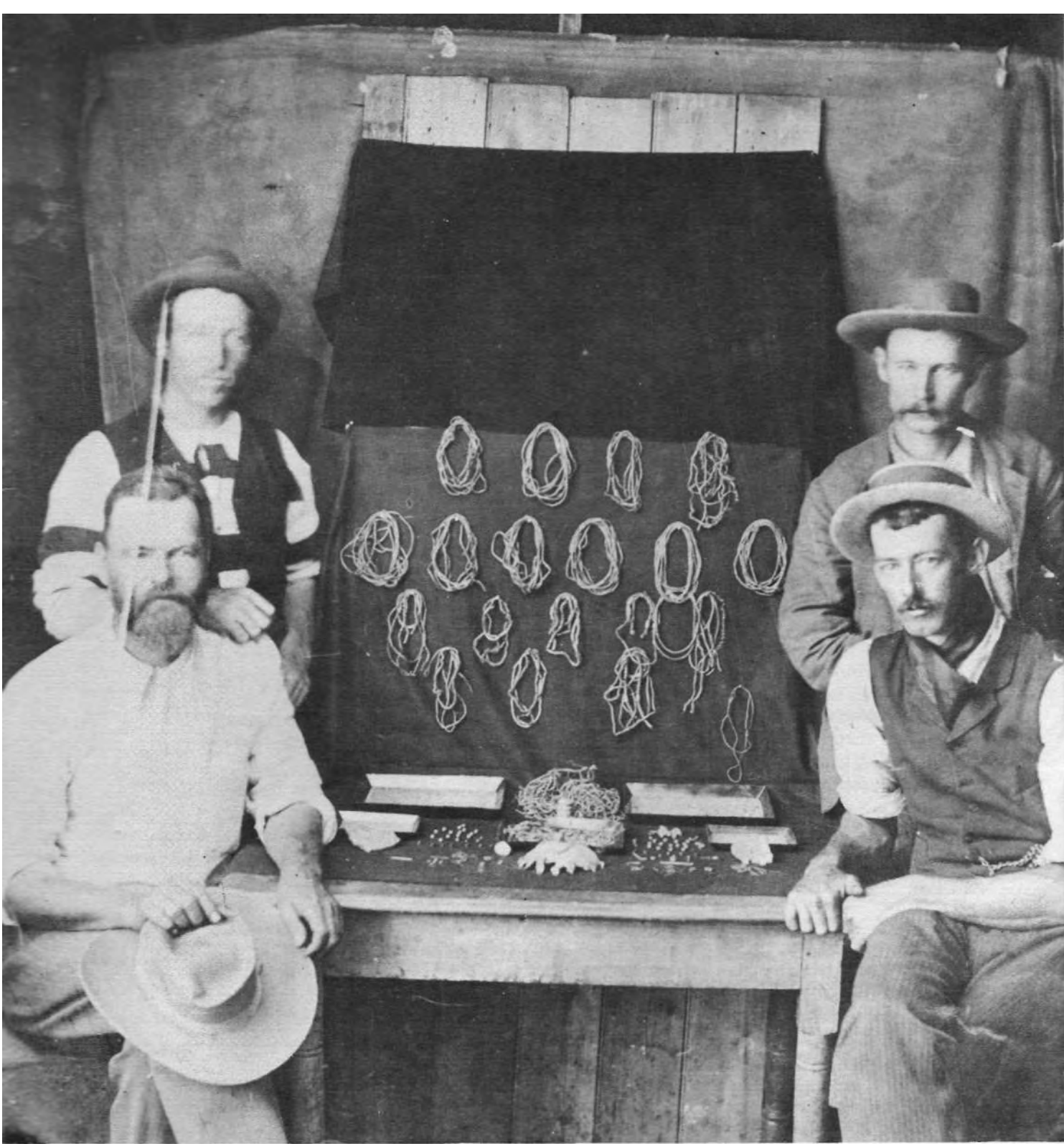
THE EXPLANATION for the presence of the civilisation which eventually led to the megalithic developments of the Zimbabwean civilisation lay in the existence of the rich gold deposits. The discovery of these led first to the working of the alluvial gold of the lower reaches of the rivers. Ultimately, as the gold was worked further and further upstream, the quest for it led to a penetration inland to the higher reaches of the rivers, and so to the very sources of the alluvial mineral in the gold-bearing strata. From this the next step was to establish mines to extract the precious metal. The extent of the gold exploitation of Rhodesia has been so enormous that it is the *raison d'être* of the proto-historic civilisation which was created. Since that is the case, a brief description of the proto-historic gold-mining is desirable.

Before the establishment of modern European mining there have been only two forms of gold recovery. The earlier was the panning for alluvial gold, which always precedes mining operations and frequently in a small way survives after much more expensive and technical forms of extraction have come to an end. The second was mining by sinking shafts.

When Bent<sup>1</sup> entered Mashonaland he found the Bantu in places seeking alluvial gold in the streams. The grains of gold were put into the quills of vultures, and in these containers they were sold to merchants whose operations were based on Portuguese territory. Such recovery of the metal is easy, requiring no capital, technical knowledge, or engineering ability. Thomas Baines<sup>2</sup> tells us that in his time these vulture quills were sold at US \$3.00 or 13/6d per ounce, a measure which is somewhat less than our ounce. Gold was also at this time still being brought to the coast in small quantities.

Alluvial exploitation of gold could never be the basis of a gold industry for any length of time. For this to be achieved it is necessary to undertake mining. Nowhere is there any evidence that the Bantu tribes have, at any time, sunk and worked deep mines in Rhodesia, South Africa, and Mozambique. At the most, they took part in open-cast excavations and mining where gold was near the surface. Nor is there any evidence that the Europeans on their arrival found the Bantu to be miners, mine-sinkers, and mining-engineers. The panning for gold was merely an art their ancestors





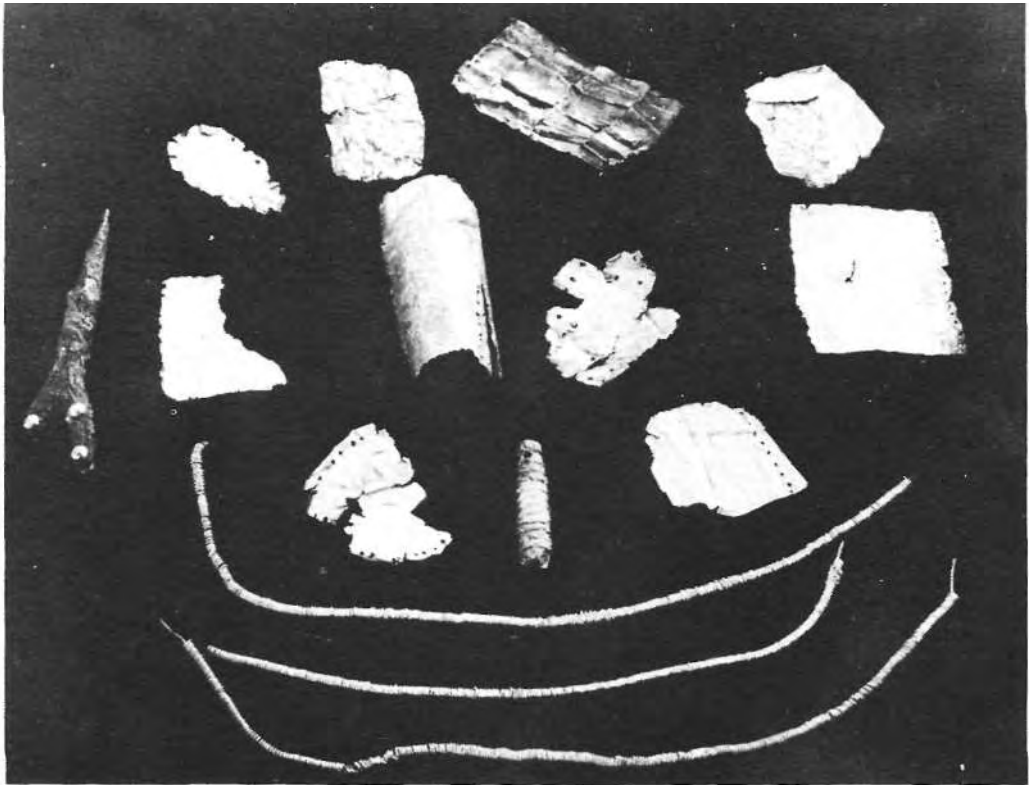
Members of the Ancient Ruins Syndicate, 1895, with gold ornaments recovered from the ancient ruins of Zimbabwe.

Entrance to one of the many ancient mines tunnelled into a quartz reef, mined intensively over a wide area.



had learnt from a former master race for whom they worked, and the survival of this activity was encouraged by the continuing market for gold in the Portuguese coastal towns of Mozambique. The fact that the Bantu had no real interest in gold extraction, which they would have had had they been derived from a people with a gold-mining tradition, is indicated by the occasion when one of the Bantu chiefs told Baines<sup>3</sup> that he was welcome to all the gold he could find.

Since the remains of the mine workings are old, and have not been worked within living memory of the white settlers, and since the existence of these walled *entrepôts* were declared by the Arabs to have been associated with gold exploitation, we are on safe ground in concluding that the falling into ruins of these walled towns is to be associated with the collapse of the mining industry. That this cessation of an active large-scale mining civilisation occurred during the period of Arab domination on the coast seems evident, because gold no longer appears to have been so important a commodity in the records of later times.



Gold foil and wire work from Zimbabwe.

These considerations lead to the view that the ancient mines must have ceased operations at least several centuries ago, and before the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century.

The size of Great Zimbabwe and other similar urban areas throughout Rhodesia, as well as the great irrigated agricultural complex of Inyanga, could not have been sustained except on the basis of an adequate labour force, the necessary food supply (a subject to which we will return later), and extensive mining operations to justify all this. When we come to study these ancient mine-workings we find their number is simply enormous, and this is consistent with our conclusions.

Felford Edwards, the mining engineer, estimated in 1897 that there were probably at least 75,000 ancient workings in Rhodesia alone. He also calculated that the ore which had been extracted totalled 43 million tons which, on an average yield of 10 dwts per ton, gave the gold recovered as 21,637,500 ounces.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, there is no evidence in late Arabic times, and certainly not since the establishment of the Portuguese, that the extraction of gold anywhere in Rhodesia could have been on such an enormous scale as this would suggest. In fact there is no evidence that there was any extraction



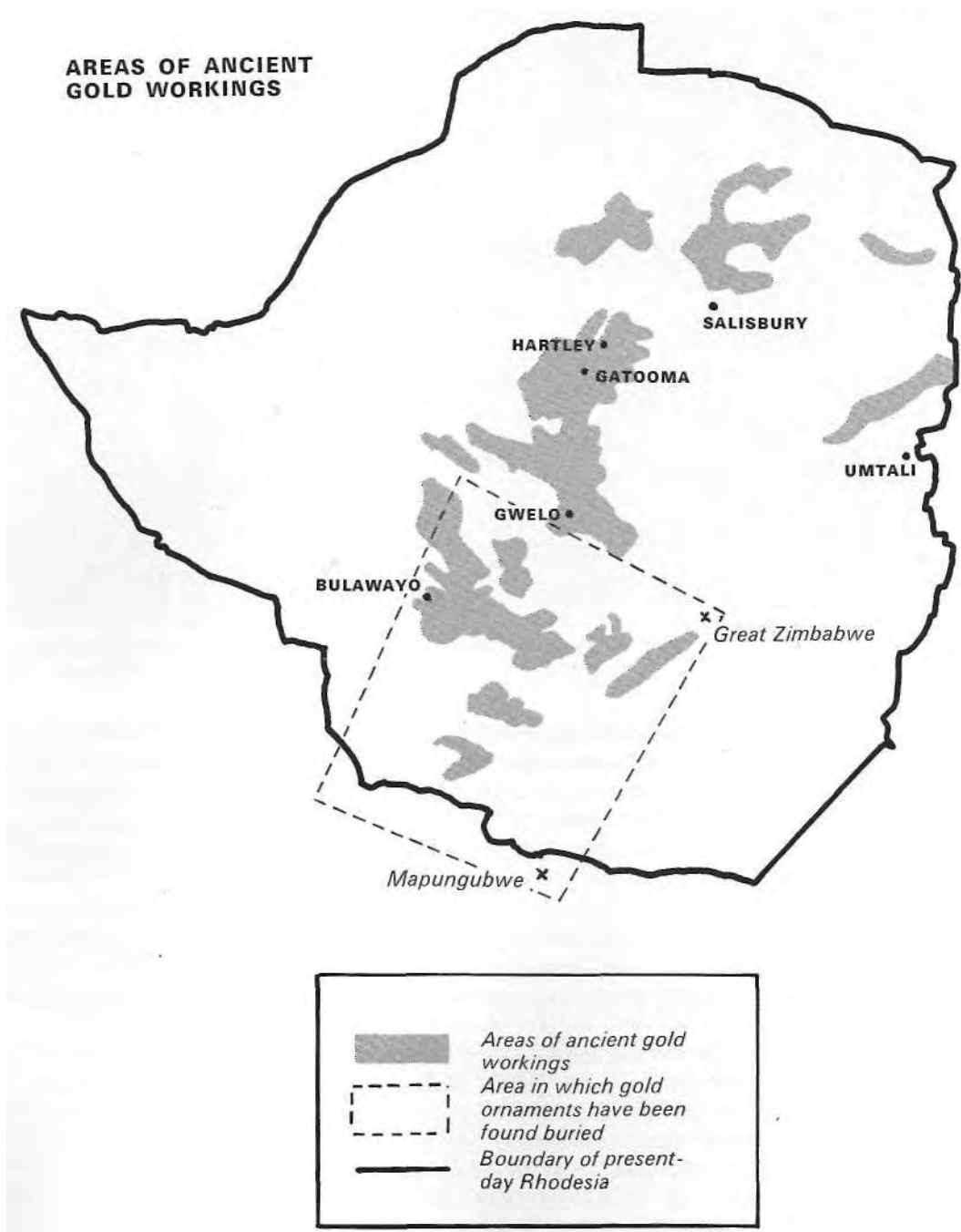
Gold ornaments and pottery discovered at Dhlo Dhlo and M'telegwa Ruins.

at all, except probably from open workings and the panning of alluvial gold. Therefore, on this account we have also to look to an earlier period in time than the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries for the development of this huge number of mines. This, again, is consistent with what we have already concluded to be the case for the period when the Zimbabwean complex of depots was in full use.

Further evidence of the antiquity of these mining ventures is to be obtained from an investigation of the shafts themselves. All the many shafts we have visited have been completely choked and overgrown with trees. It was the same nearly a century ago when J. T. Bent<sup>5</sup> investigated the problem. He says:

"The first set of old workings which we visited . . . consisted of rows of vertical shafts, now filled up with rubbish, sunk along the edges of the auriferous reef, and presumably, from instances we saw later, communicating with one another by horizontal shafts below. We saw also several instances of sloping and horizontal shafts, all pointing to considerable engineering skill. It must have been ages since these shafts were worked."

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION



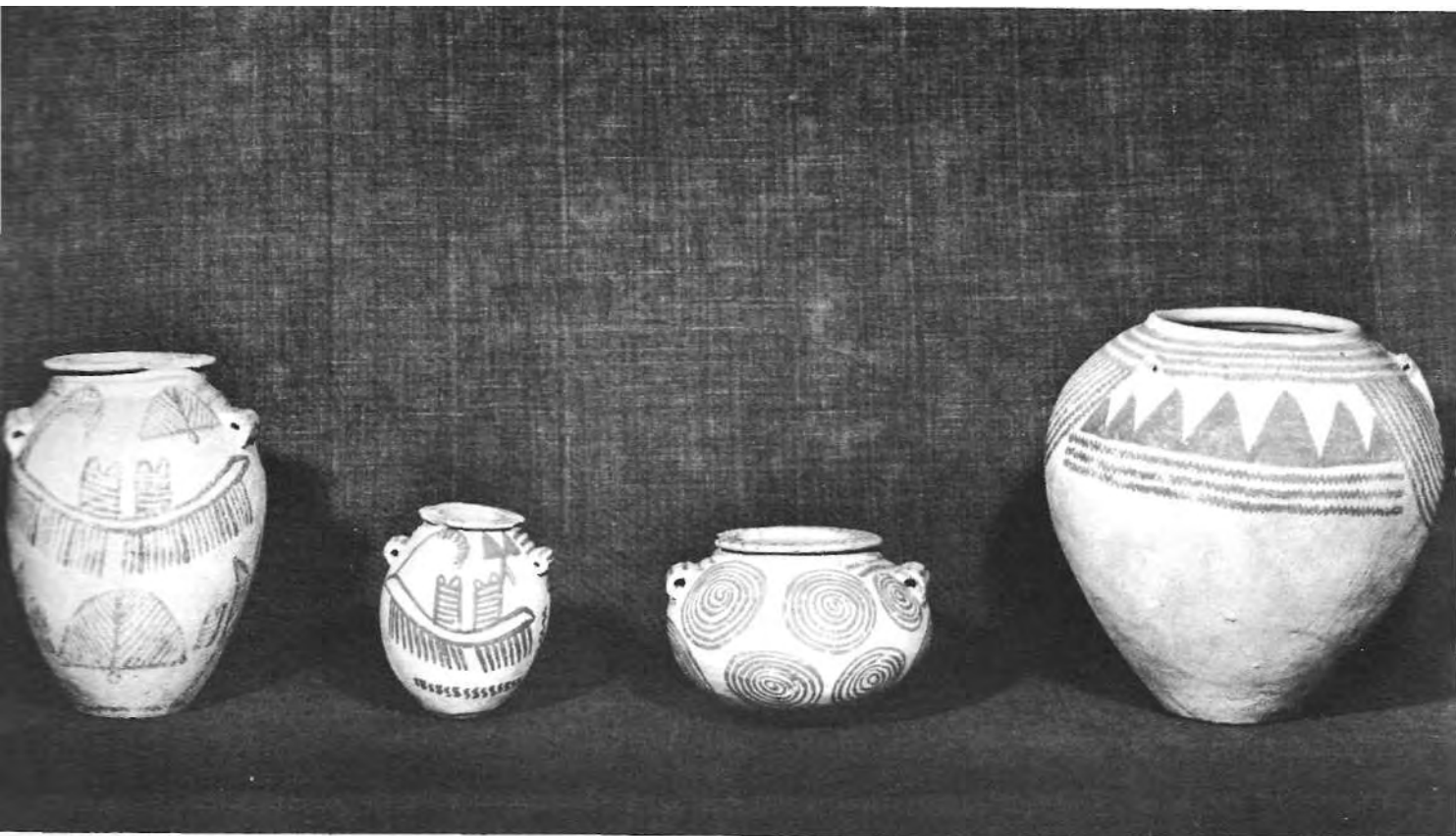
From all these considerations we have evidence of a simply enormous mining effort which we must put earlier than the fourteenth century. It must have been taking place over many centuries, and so it is likely that its peak coincided with the building of the walls of Zimbabwe and the other settlements; in other words, about the sixth to the seventh centuries A.D.

We ask those who argue for a late Bantu origin for these mining enterprises to show similar Bantu engineering skill and initiative elsewhere in Africa where minerals existed, as in Zambia and South Africa. They cannot do so, and consequently it is contrary to reason to ascribe all this highly developed mining technology to people whose members have at no time worked in mines at a higher level than unskilled or semi-skilled labour.

An exploitation on this scale demands highly intelligent technological skill, people with a tradition for organising such work, and a means of working and selling the gold when mined and smelted. We are, therefore, ineluctably forced to turn to the East Coast of Africa, and to the Semitic peoples lining its shores.

1. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.296.
2. **Baines, Thomas** *The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa*. London: Edward Stanford, 1877, p.2.
3. *Ibid.* p.22.
4. **Edwards, Felford** *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 26th June, 1897.
5. **Bent**, *The Ruined Cities*. . . . . , p.288.





Pottery from the Gerzean culture found in the cemeteries of Naqada and El-Ballas, showing stylised water, hills and spirals.

## CHAPTER

# 17

### Foreign Articles and Artefacts found in the Great Zimbabwe Ruins

IT IS OUR view that it is specious chicanery to reject the evidence of the carbon-14 dating for timber found in the Great Zimbabwe ruins. Nowhere else would this have occurred except in Rhodesia, and it is so unscientific an attitude that it can be rejected for what it is—an attempt to change the evidence in order to arrive at a result favourable to current fashionable trends in what could be called quasi-politico-archaeology.

The scientific evidence shows that Great Zimbabwe was being built about the sixth century A.D. and all the relevant evidence from the other disciplines with which we have been dealing is consistent with this view.

When we come to study dateable articles found at Great Zimbabwe we are handling evidence which does not tell us when it was built, but when people were there who used these artefacts after the building had taken place. In other words that data gives us some indication of the period during which Great Zimbabwe survived.

We will, therefore, proceed to examine such evidence.

Among the well-known articles which have been found in the ruins are those of unmistakable foreign origin. These include Celadon and Ming ware from China, pottery from Persia, glass of Arab origin, and beads, some of which may have come from Venice, Egypt, and possibly even from Thebes in Boeotia, Greece.

Celadon ware belongs particularly to the Sung dynasty of China 960-1279 A.D.<sup>1</sup> After the overthrow of the last Sung Emperor in 1279, China passed under the Yuan (1279-1368) Dynasty set up by Kublai Khan. Under them there was an expansion of trade and vast quantities of Celadon ware were exported, particularly to south-east Asia and Japan. In addition, under Yuan much of the ware was made for India and the Near East. The collection at Istanbul was brought back by the Ottoman Sultans from Persia.

Ming ware belongs to the succeeding period of 1368-1644 under which dynasty foreign trade remained very active. Direct trade with Europe began with the arrival of the Portuguese carracks in Chinese waters.

We have, therefore, a span of time from 1279 to 1644 for the import of one or the other of these wares to the Zimbabwean civilisation.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

In the first place we have to make the point that, owing to the fragility of pottery, its introduction anywhere in primitive times (before the cult for antiques arose) must be considered as having occurred within a very few years (if that) of the date of manufacture. Consequently the very latest date at which Celadon pottery could arrive would be about 1375 and for Ming ware about 1650.

Since these ceramics are to be associated with Zimbabwe at its fall this destroys, completely, the argument that this event was about 1700 A.D., a claim which has been put forward by those wishful thinkers who desire to attribute the civilisation to the Bantu and its termination to the arrival of European invaders. The pottery alone makes it clear that the end of Zimbabwe must have been between 1375 and a date which could not be later than 1650.

However, there is another factor which enables us to be even more precise than this. Chinese ships were not the most efficient or serviceable. Even by the sixteenth century these ships still had sails made of reeds, and rode to wooden anchors. As a consequence of this, and probably a lack of seaman-like ability, we find that by the second half of that century the Ming Empire was not only unable to defend its frontiers, but failed to combat the Malay and Japanese pirates. The result was that the Chinese were forbidden by their government to undertake ocean voyages.<sup>2</sup> This means that by about 1550 A.D. the Chinese merchant fleets were off the high seas, and so the principal distributors of Chinese manufactured goods were out of business.

Therefore, it can be concluded that any effective distribution of Ming ware by sea routes had diminished and had even become rare by 1550 A.D.

This means that we have to look to 1279-1368 for the period at which the Celadon ware was arriving and to about 1368-1550 for the Ming ware. The first Portuguese mariner to reach China was Jorge Alvares in 1513<sup>3</sup> Thus the Portuguese could not have been the agency through whom Celadon ware reached Rhodesia (as it was no longer being made by that time) nor is it likely that they brought Ming ware to the coast of East Africa either.

Therefore, the evidence from the pottery, which has always been considered of prime importance for dating in archaeology, makes it fairly clear that we must look to a period from about 1300 to 1500 for the time when Celadon and Ming ware were imported. In that case, this was the latest period at which Zimbabwe was effective as an *entrepot*. 1700 A.D. is quite out of the question.

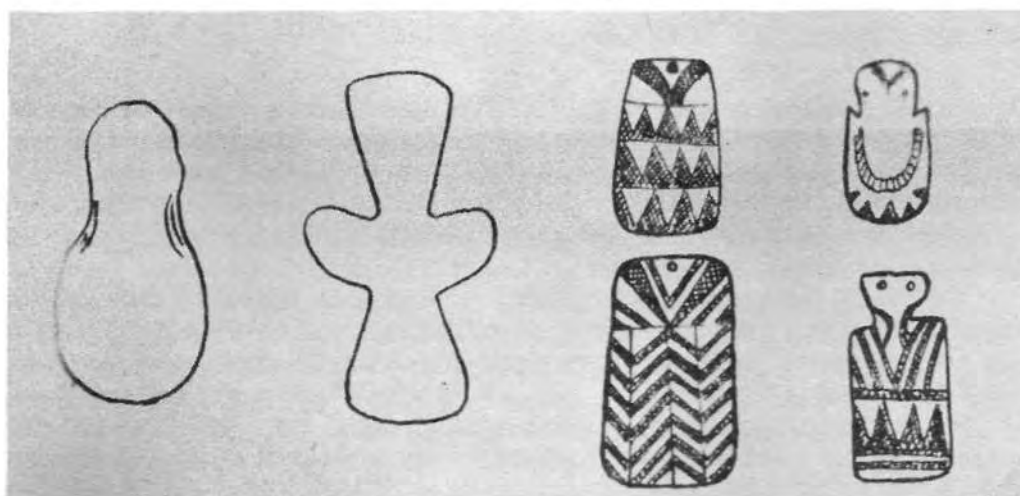
While the beginning of the sixteenth century must be, on the evidence we have given, the terminal date for the final stage of Zimbabwe, this is inconsistent with the historical evidence which we have already given, which makes it clear that by, or around, that date Zimbabwe was already a ruin.

Therefore, to reconcile these various sets of facts, it would be reasonable to take about 1400 A.D. for the final stage of Great Zimbabwe, when possibly some building work might still be taking place at Zimbabwe at the termination of its development. For this date would, at least, allow a short time

A stele of the Goddess Tanit (Carthaginian). This is probably of the same common origin as the soapstone and other megalithic standing stones found in Zimbabwe.



Flat idols from the Iberian peninsula, probably of the same ultimate origins as the soapstone beam of Zimbabwe and the image of the Goddess Tanit, Carthage.





A decorated soapstone beam.

before the collapse recorded by the Portuguese, from Arab sources, as already a fact when they wrote in 1600 A.D. It would be a date coinciding with the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1368) when Celadon ware was being exported, and the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, when Ming ware was exported, and before the Chinese overseas fleets had had to withdraw from extensive overseas trade.

Be this as it may, it would seem for all that to be too late a date for the zenith of Zimbabwe, when the greatest buildings would have been completed, for we find other objects of foreign origin the dating of which is earlier than 1400 A.D. Among these is a Persian bowl, which is thought to have been thirteenth century. Since what has been said about the fragility of pottery makes ceramic ware an important and exact method of dating, it follows that we have to consider an earlier date. A Persian bowl would only be

Geometric patterns on  
decorated soapstone  
beams, Zimbabwe.



imported at a time when Zimbabwe had both a frequent trade with the outer world and some inhabitants who created a demand for such articles. Such conditions were at their optimum when the Zimbabwe civilisation was at its highest.

Therefore, the thirteenth century, possibly coincident with the emergence of the Sung Dynasty (1279) and its exports of Celadon ware, can be assumed to have seen Zimbabwe in a flourishing condition before its fall.

Judging by the ruins one sees it is unlikely that the civilisation survived only for a short time at its greatest development, and so the date of the ninth century that Dr. Caton-Thompson herself postulated for Zimbabwe is a more likely one for the completion of the structure as we now see it, than is that of Mr. Roger Summers' 1700 A.D.—a date which we have shown on the pottery evidence above to be quite untenable. Certainly ninth century

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Indian glass beads have been found at the site. In so far as that is so, it tends to support such a date—although, of course, such beads are durable, unlike pottery, and might be imported a long time after manufacture. This supposition is unlikely, as these articles are obviously the result of foreign overseas trade (which would only be in new articles and not antiques) and are not the result of a gradual transmission across the continent of Africa from generation to generation, from region to region.

Always, however, we are brought back to the evidence of the carbon-14 dating. The two pieces of timber dated 591 and 702 A.D. respectively  $\pm$  100 years. This means that we have a period from 491 to 802, and if we take the median date we get approximately 650, with a range which might be from about 550 to 750 A.D. at the outside. The latter date does not pre-date by too great an extent Miss Caton-Thompson's dating of the ninth century A.D.

Therefore it would seem that the erection of Zimbabwe, as we now see it, took place about one thousand years earlier than the impossibly late date that the school represented by Mr. Roger Summers has given for it.

Thus far we have established by carbon-14 dating the period for the later phase of the building of Great Zimbabwe and by the objects we have cited the termination of that phase. These give us a dating from the sixth-seventh-eighth to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries for the last period of the civilisation of Zimbabwe.

This conclusion is consistent with dating of the later phases of the related phenomena and culture at Mapungubwe in the Transvaal. For, on any rational theory, this must be later than Great Zimbabwe. If the Bantu built it (for which there is no evidence, as we have shown elsewhere<sup>4</sup>), since they invaded southern Africa from the north they would have reached the Transvaal after occupying Rhodesia. If it were built by foreigners entering from the coast of Mozambique as venturers coming from the north, they would also have arrived in the Transvaal later than at their settlements in Rhodesia.

This is of significance in dating Zimbabwe. The fourth phase at Mapungubwe has been dated by Captain Gardiner as between 1300 and 1400.<sup>5</sup> If this be the case, then the building of the last important phase before the collapse at Zimbabwe was earlier. The terminal date at Great Zimbabwe of about 1300 A.D. (which we have now arrived at on the evidence cited in this chapter) is wholly consistent with a date of 1450 A.D. for the end of the fourth phase at Mapungubwe. These dates are, in their turn, consistent with the Portuguese in the sixteenth century being told that the complex in Rhodesia was already in ruins.

Any other interpretation of the approximate dating is wholly at variance with the facts derived from a number of quite distinct sources of evidence, which, because they are from different fields of investigation, form a complete cross-checking and verification of these conclusions.

Thus far we have established the datings for the end of this civilisation which came immediately following its peak development. It would be as well to examine now the evidence which may help to give some indication of its beginnings, in its earlier and more primitive phases.



We have already indicated that the Zimbabwean structures are megalithic in their concepts. If they were found in Europe this would normally involve datings ranging from the Chalcolithic to the Bronze Age periods.\*

However, assuming that the centre of diffusion of the religion, and so the building concepts which accompanied it in its spread from land to land, arose in the Mediterranean and the Near East lands, then by the time this civilisation reached far away places it would be very much later than when it was flourishing in its homeland. Thus, such religious motifs and their associated culture would exist side by side with a much later technological period, such as that of the Iron Age. During this spread, much of the original religious and cultural concepts would have changed, although some things might still survive which were analogous to artefacts or techniques of earlier ages in the main centres of the megalithic civilisation. The finding of such does not necessarily mean that they are of the same age as similar articles found at the centres of the diffusion. Sometimes there could be a thousand or more years of lag involved. However, the discovery of such analogous objects is of significance.

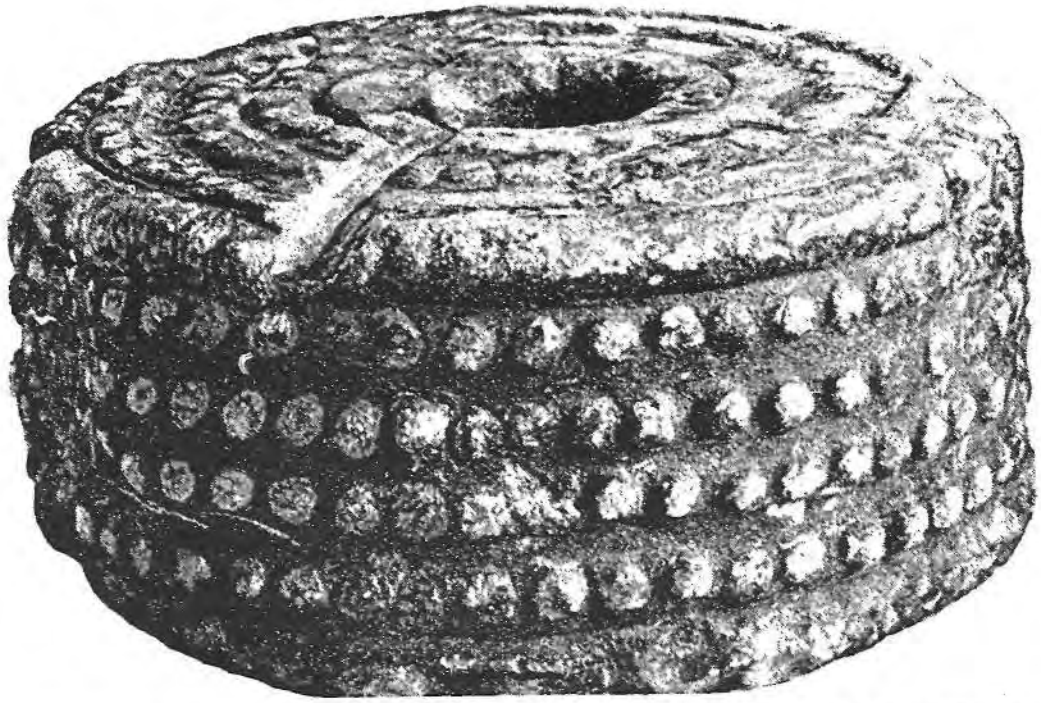
For instance, at Zimbabwe there has been discovered such a figure as that of the decorated soapstone beam which Bent illustrated.<sup>6</sup> This is, however, analogous to certain flat idols found in various places of the European Neolithic period, even to their having evidence of the chevron pattern on them. Such an article must be very early, by Rhodesian archaeological standards, and one would expect its origins to take us back to about 500 B.C.—even allowing for a lag of about 1500 years for this motif to arrive.

Dr. A. J. Bruwer<sup>7</sup> has drawn attention to the soapstone figurines discovered by Mr. E. M. Andrews at the Umtali ruins which Randall-Maciver called "African"<sup>8</sup> Dr. Bruwer compares them with Levantine figurines, citing Rawlinson<sup>9</sup> and Harden,<sup>10</sup> to account for the crudity of these latter, which they share in common with the Rhodesian articles.

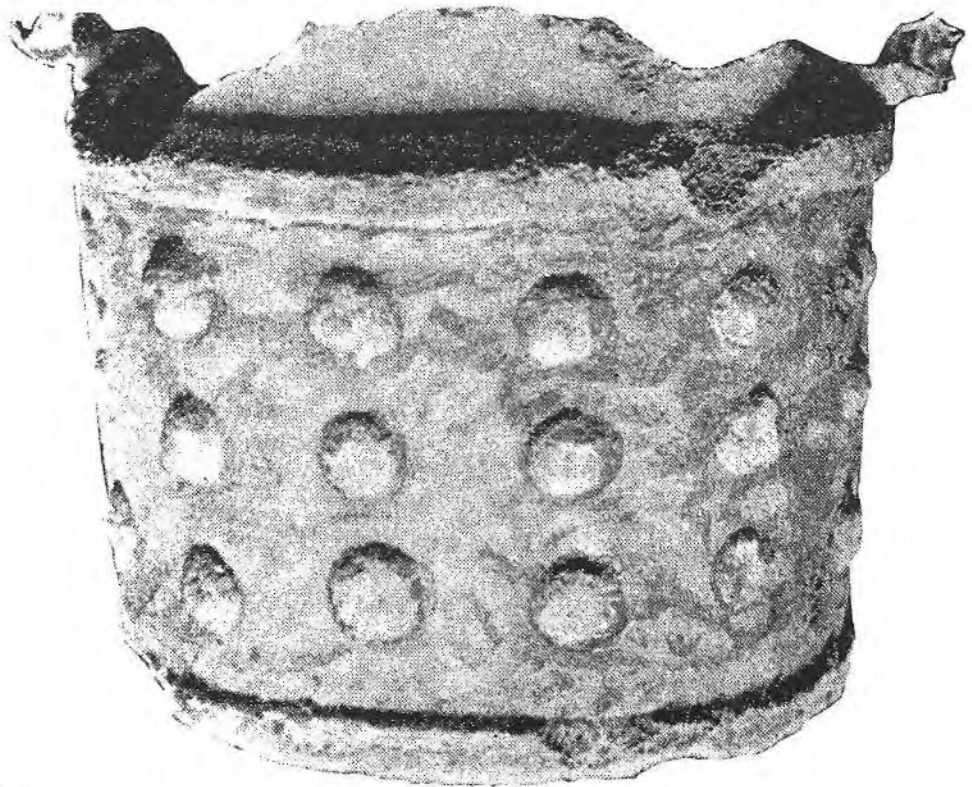
There is certainly something in common between these<sup>11</sup> Rhodesian figurines and the reproduction by Professor J. D. Evans<sup>12</sup> of the figurine of a stylised clay female idol from the cremation cemetery in the Tarxien Temples, Malta, dating from about 1400 B.C. Distance, time, and material out of which they are made, will account for differences, but what is in common is quite remarkable. The tendency in the Umtali figurines to have the suggestion of the head-dress found in the Maltese idol, with the same flat (not prognathous) faces, the arms fused to the sides, the short legs, and the small round breasts, all point to similarities between these figures. (The narrow noses of the Rhodesian figurines suggest a non-Negroid origin.) Professor Evans points out that this type of idol has Mycenaen parallels.

\*However there are exceptions to this. The Nuraghi of Sardinia are megalithic structures of as early, or earlier, than 1500 B.C. which continued to be built down to 500 B.C. The Etruscans, after they had made contact with the Sardinian people, copied these in the eighth century B.C. eight centuries later, and began to erect them on the Etruscan coast. Consequently the Nuraghi span a period of a thousand years, and their principles of construction were being exported till near the end of their period in Sardinia. (Riley, Carroll L. *The Origins of Civilization*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969, p.139.)

THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION



Above: A soapstone cylinder from Zimbabwe. Below: Object from the Temple of Pathos, Cyprus.



The decorated soapstone beam illustrated by Bent<sup>13</sup> has all the characteristics of an idol, and has parallels in the flat idols of the Iberian peninsula,<sup>14</sup> which belong to the Neolithic period. However, there is no doubt that such idols lasted a long time. For instance, one type which has arms on it is very similar to the stele in the form of the sign of the goddess Tanit, of the late Carthaginian period. Thus a survival of this form can be shown over several thousand years.

The most astonishing find at Zimbabwe is surely the ingot mould in soapstone.<sup>15</sup> As Bent<sup>16</sup> informs us, this mould (which is of a very peculiar shape) corresponds almost exactly to an ingot of tin found in Falmouth Harbour which is now in Truro Museum. This was, according to Sir Henry James, whom he cites, exactly as described by Diodorus Siculus who tells us that the British tin ingots were made in the form of huckle-bones (astragali, ἄτραγαλῶν ῥυθμοῦς Bent mentions<sup>17</sup> that Sir John Evans had drawn attention to a similar mould found in Dalmatia, and that the Bantu north of the Zambezi "now make ingots of iron of a shape which might easily be supposed to have been derived from the astragalus".<sup>18</sup>

Bent is surely justified, with certain qualifications, in saying that "the finding of two ingots in two remote places where Phoenician influence has been proved to be so strong is very good presumptive evidence to establish the fact that the gold workers of ancient Zimbabwe worked for the Phoenician market."<sup>19</sup> Our qualification is that the Phoenician influence may have spread to other countries from which Rhodesia derived this form in due course. The Phoenician inspiration of this ingot is obvious, but it is not evidence of direct Phoenician participation in the gold mining of the interior of Southern Africa.

The Phoenician trade with Britain appears to have been as early as the beginning of the first millennium B.C. This would seem to suggest that one would not be grossly exaggerating the early date of the first arrival of the proto-type of this mould in Rhodesia if one places it as being at any time between 500 B.C. and the end of the pre-Christian era. Such a distinctive form, in each case associated with making ingots of metal, cannot be the result of parallel evolution in mining artefacts. Therefore, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that it was introduced into Rhodesia by Phoenicians or people associated with them, or others who derived it from one or the other.

We would also draw attention to the fact that objects with little knobs upon them, found at Zimbabwe, have parallels elsewhere—and are objects of a respectable antiquity. Such knobs are found on a Bronze Age cup from Wessex, England.<sup>20</sup> Again, studded ware of this kind is found in Malta.<sup>21</sup> It is not necessary, any more than in the other instances we have cited, to date the Rhodesian articles as early as their parallels elsewhere. But it is essential to recognise that these artefacts belong to traditions and techniques which are not indigenous to Africa, and so they are intrusive from outside. Furthermore, the intrusion must come from the same *milieu*, directly or indirectly, as the non-African parallels which exist.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Bent<sup>22</sup> has drawn attention to the evidence of what he believed to be sun worship, and the existence of the solar disk at Zimbabwe.

Dr. Bruwer<sup>23</sup> has drawn attention to the finding of one rock-engraving of the symbol of the sun-god, Baal, at Redan, Transvaal, and of another with the moon-goddess as well. Both were found by Mrs. Hannah Benecke, at "Stowlands", on the Vaal River, near Christiana.<sup>24</sup>

These symbols do not establish a Phoenician connection—except remotely. We have already shown that Samsum (the sun) was a goddess and Sin (the moon) a god of the pre-Judaic, pre-Christian, and pre-Islamic, Arabs of south-western Arabia. These finds, with the other evidence, however, lend powerful support to a strong Sabaean Arab influence in the development of Rhodesia.

It is, therefore, more economical to turn to this source than to Phoenicia as the immediate source of origin, although earlier Phoenicia had the same symbology for these two deities. Nevertheless, we do not deny that these symbols and the shape of the ingots could have been derived from the Phoenicians themselves.

Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba (that is of the Sabaean), were involved in profitable trade with the coasts of the Indian Ocean. We know also that under Necho II the Phoenicians circumnavigated Africa. Finally, we know that Hanno sent out from Carthage a huge fleet of 30 000 to colonise West Africa and exploit the gold resources of the Gold Coast. Therefore, there is nothing improbable in the beginnings of the worship of the sun and moon having been planted on the coasts of Mozambique, and from thence carried inland. This would mean contacts with Rhodesia from about 1000 B.C. onwards. The likelihood is, for all that, that much later settlements of related peoples, such as the Sabaean, from about 600 B.C. onwards to 600 A.D. were responsible for these cultural traits.

If, preceding the Sabaean, there were settlements of Phoenicians in Rhodesia, we believe that the colonisation could have been only indirect, and probably after a long lapse of time from their first appearance on the coast. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Sabaean, from the periods between 1200 and 600 B.C., might well have created small stations on the Mozambique coast at the effluents of the Sabi, Zambezi, and other rivers, to work what must have been the plentiful supplies of alluvial gold. Gradually working upstream, they could have extended their activities inland and, probably after some centuries, their descendants (mixed with Zanj elements brought in by them) would reach Rhodesia. These would hardly precede in time the arrival of the first of the Sabaean emigrations of the sixth century B.C., which settlement probably formed part of the movement of expansion which took the same people into Eritrea.

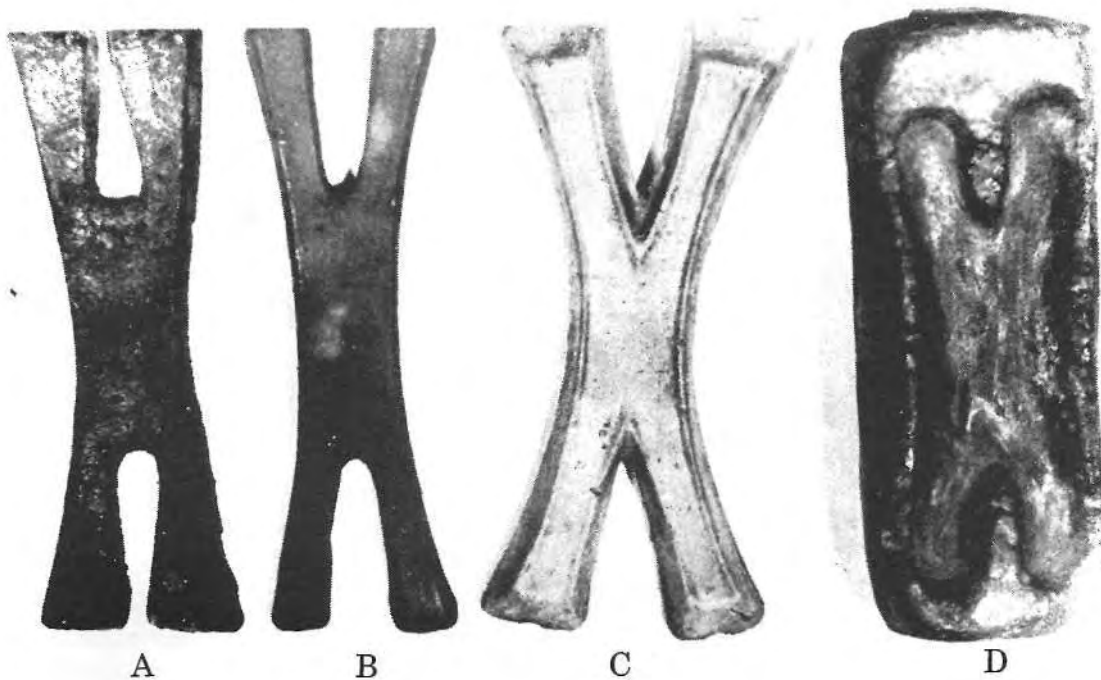
The amalgam of all these would provide the pagan Sabaean basis of the peoples of Rhodesia. They would transmit techniques they had inherited or borrowed from early Phoenician elements which were involved—and so the Phoenician type of mould would be explained. The sun and moon symbols

are more likely to owe their immediate origin to the Sabaean immigration, as did also, we believe, the Zimbabwe bird or falcon symbol.

By 500 B.C. there could have been mining enterprises and the foundation of a pre-Islamic Sabaean civilisation in Rhodesia. It would have been primitive, and it must have taken more than a millennium to reach that final stage which saw the beginnings of Great Zimbabwe in the sixth century A.D., which we attribute to Judaized Sabaean refugees, whose own culture probably still preserved many pagan Sabaean elements. As a consequence of this they easily made a synthesis of their own Judaized culture and that of the earlier, and entirely pagan, Sabaeans, who also had cultural elements derived from Egypt, Carthage, and Phoenicia. In this sense we believe that there may well be Phoenician roots. But if we have to attribute any motif (such as the sun and moon symbols) to a single cause, we believe it is a mistake to attribute these to such a remote origin, when there is a much more simple explanation in the Sabaean migration to Rhodesia, to which all the evidence points.

The evidence from the artefacts which we have mentioned would appear to indicate a foreign settlement in Rhodesia from the Red Sea coasts (with remoter contacts from the Mediterranean) starting in the middle of the first

Copper ingots from Katanga (A-C) and mould from Zimbabwe (D).



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

millennium B.C. The civilisation which developed continued to have trade relations with the outside world, with countries as far away as Arabia, India, and China, until the end of the fifteenth century when it must have ceased. It is unlikely that it went on to the end of the Ming period.

We believe the carbon-14 dating must be accepted as decisive. The evidence from such identifiable objects as those we have mentioned, gives us the span of life of this civilisation—which is consistent with the carbon-14 dating on the one hand, and also with the evidence from the other wide range of disciplines on which we have called as a means of throwing light on the origins of proto-historic Rhodesia, on the other.

The evidence we have cited would, therefore, seem to indicate, even if vaguely and with many gaps in our knowledge, contact with the civilised white peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean and of the Red Sea at least during the first millennium B.C. We cannot tell precisely when the civilisation started, but we can be specific when we come to the collapse of Great Zimbabwe, and that was some centuries before the Portuguese accounts of about 1600 A.D.

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7. **Bruwer, A. J.** *Zimbabwe: Rhodesia's Ancient Greatness*. Johannesburg: Hugh Kearsland, 1965, p.36.
8. **Maciver, D. Randall-** *Mediaeval Rhodesia*. London: Macmillan, 1906, p.35.
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10. **Harden, Donald** *The Phoenicians*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1962, p.152.
11. **Bruwer, Zimbabwe**. . . . ., plate opposite p.64.
12. **Evans, J. D.** *Malta*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1959, fig. 91.
13. **Bent, The Ruined Cities**. . . . ., p.191.
14. **Maringer, J.** *The Gods of Prehistoric Man*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1960, p.163.
15. **Bent, The Ruined Cities**. . . . ., p.218.
16. *Ibid*, p.216.
17. *Ibid*.
18. *Ibid*.
19. *Ibid*, p.218.
20. **Palmer, G. and Lloyd, N.** *Archaeology A to Z*. London: Warne, 1968, p.101.
21. **Bradley, R. N.** *Malta and the Mediterranean Race*. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1912, fig. 29.
22. **Bent, The Ruined Cities**. . . . ., p.141.
23. **Bruwer, Zimbabwe**. . . . . figures 62 and 63.
24. *Ibid*, figure 4.

## CHAPTER

# 18

### The Collapse of the Zimbabwean Civilisation

IN DISCUSSING the building of Great Zimbabwe we have covered the period of the earlier phases into which the archaeologists have divided the horizons, without necessarily going into them in detail. This is not an archaeological exposition of the detailed findings at each level. We are solely concerned with those facts which bear upon origins and the time-scale. Just as we have been helped earlier by the modern radio-carbon techniques, now, when we approach the end of the civilisation which was truly Zimbabwean, we have further assistance from the same source.

Zimbabwe Phase III is dated by the carbon-14 tests at from 1080 to 1450 A.D., with a margin of error of more or less 150 years either way. Taking an average of 75 years possible error, we could reach a range of 1005 extending to 1375 A.D. as the probable period of this Phase III. We believe that it is not permissible to add to the length of the period, which would take it into 1525, or even 1600 A.D., if we added the whole 150 years. If we did this it would bring us into the full historical period at which time, on many counts, we can show that Zimbabwe had become Ichabod—and its glory had departed. For this reason we believe that the last phase of Zimbabwe was from about 1005 to 1375 A.D., before it finally collapsed under the combined pressures of declining gold production, internal population problems, and external assaults and invasions.

The decline in gold production was occurring because the water-table set a limit, before the days of pumps, to the depth of the mines. Consequently, as easily exploitable gold was worked out there must have been economic decline before the final collapse. This weakened the government of the Zimbabwean civilisation and made it less able to arrest its own extinction. This, in its turn, must have affected the internal helot population which was steadily becoming Bantuised. At such a time the external pressures of invaders and the risings of client peoples must have reached a stage at which the defenders could no longer sustain themselves, and so a collapse occurred somewhere about 1375 A.D. Zimbabwe and the other great centres, monuments to an energetic Semitic population, came to an end.



## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

The probability is the client peoples (as distinct from acculturated Zenj and the like), who had been tolerated in Rhodesia, were ancestors of the Tonga, who came originally from Tanganyika. Their tradition tells us that they were preceded by a people with long black hair (a Mediterranean trait) and yellow skins. The Hottentot-Cushitic-Mediterranean crosses have this colouring. At the stage of collapse these proto-Tonga would have moved in, no doubt, and occupied the lands of their former superiors. At least, that is usually what occurs in such cases, and we have no reason to believe it was any different in Rhodesia.

On their heels came the Karanga or Kalanga people. They also came down from the neighbourhood of Lake Tanganyika, where people of a similar tribal name still survive.

It was from these Karanga that their Paramount Chiefs, the Monomotapas, came. These chiefs with their Karanga and Tonga followers were the first Bantu conquerors of Rhodesia. At the time when they arrived and succeeded in establishing themselves, the Arabs still had an Emir or Governor at Sena, on the Zambezi, which had been both the Arab capital of their Sofala province, and the *entrepot* for gold coming in from the town and land around Yufi. Sena was also in close contact with the southern province of the Zenj. Before the incursions and conquest of Rhodesia by the Karanga and Tonga peoples, the Emir exercised considerable influence, as is to be expected. The power that controls the outlet of the exports of the mines invariably becomes paramount over the producers. Therefore, towards the end of the pre-Islamic Arab-Limi kingdom of Rhodesia, this may well have become feudatory to Arab sovereignty, as were the Zenj themselves. This is what a careful reading of the Arab accounts would tend to suggest.

By the time we come to the Portuguese narratives at the beginning of the sixteenth century, there appears to be confusion in their minds as to the relative positions and functions of the Emir, on the one hand, and the Monomotapa, on the other. This is to be expected as the Emir's people would, through crossing, be partly Bantuised. In any case, both the somewhat racially mixed Arab power and the Bantu would be alien to the Portuguese. It is always difficult for newcomers to evaluate the position in such racially complex situations. The arrival of the Portuguese effectively destroyed the Arab authority, and with it brought to an end any survival of ethnic, cultural, or religious individuality of the neighbouring dependent Zenj, just as the arrival of the Tonga followed by the Karanga destroyed what had become a similar ethnic and cultural situation in Rhodesia.

The peoples whom the invading Bantu overran and drove out of this part of Central Africa, as we have already pointed out, included those who were to become the Sotho. These were part of the native and Bantuised-native population of the Yufi rulers, who were known to the Arabs as Limi. This word (following Mr. Mullan) we have associated with the name of God. It is significant that *Mulimo*, which has a closely related structure, is found only among the Sotho, Venda (who we will show were also derived from the Zimbabwe population) and the Amandebele.

Another people involved in these events were the Lemba. Some writers, such as Mr. Mullan,<sup>1</sup> would derive the Lemba from Sena in what was the Arab state of Sofala, and see in their customs and traditions an Islamic Arab origin. The consensus of opinion among all those students who have studied seriously this people has been that there are Semitic elements in their ancestry. Among these are Dr. N. J. van Warmelo<sup>2</sup> and the Rev. H. von Sicard.<sup>3</sup> The only difference of opinion which might exist concerning the Lemba is whether they were Islamic or, as we believe, pre-Islamic in origin. We believe that the evidence is consistent with a pre-Islamic and Judaized Arab origin. We have already given reasons for believing the theory that the Lemba are derived from Islamic Arab origins is untenable, and we have sought to show that they are derived from Judaized pre-Islamic Arabs.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, we believe that they are descended from the original Judaized rulers of Zimbabwe although, through racial adulteration, they are now Bantu—but Bantu Negroids with very perceptible Caucasoid genes, particularly of the Eastern Mediterranean race from which the Arabs are derived.

Chief Goromonzi of the maShona-Zegura, *circa* 1901. These Shona tribesmen indicate racially mixed types through infiltration of non-Negroid genes.





The Dzata Ruins, Vendale.

What, we believe, fixes beyond doubt the Rhodesian rather than the Mozambique origin of the Lemba is the fact that they have a distinct stone building tradition which is an art foreign to Bantu as a whole. After migrating from Rhodesia into Vendale, in the northern Transvaal, they sought to build a stone town for themselves, the ruins of which can still be seen.<sup>5</sup> This was a crude imitation of such places as Zimbabwe, and its crudeness represents the degree to which they were no longer ancient megalith-building Sabaeans. The fact remains, for all that, they did build their Dhzata or Stone town, and they say that it was a copy of the Dhzata they left behind in Rhodesia. This seems to fix the Lemba onto the ethnic line of the white inhabitants of the Zimbabwean civilisation, just as their Mosaic traditions take them back to the same people.

Mullan<sup>6</sup> would see in the name Lemba a corruption of the word Arab, from Arab, Alaba, Ba-Leba, Ba-Lemba. There would be in this nothing inconsistent with the views we have expressed. We have shown<sup>7</sup> that the Lemba consider that their real name is Mulunga, which means white man. They are still the technical people among the Bantu, having long been noted for their skill in metals. The other Bantu regard them as technologists as well as people with religious knowledge, and as being famous in trade.

We have shown<sup>8</sup> that the Lemba claim that their male ancestors only were white. They frankly admit that, when these white men came from overseas, from the north, they took native (Zenj) women and went on doing



The Dzata Ruins, Vendlan.

so until, presumably, they were taking Bantu women. For that reason the Lemba exclude women from their religious rituals because they are regarded as "natives".

We have indicated that the term Zenj really meant native to the Arabs. It would be applied to Cushitic-Hottentots, Cushitic-Hottentot-Bantu, and ultimately to Bantu alone. This word must have been used also by the Judaized Arabs of Zimbabwe for their indigenous work force. It is not surprising to find not only the Arabs, but also the Lemba, using it for the native population. For we find a variant of this name Zenj, "foreigner" or "native", used by the Lemba for a Bantu woman—Mu-Senji. This word Zenj was the term used until recently by the Arabs for pagan Bantu as far inland as the Congo.<sup>9</sup>

We see, therefore, in the Lemba the descendants of the Judaized Arab population who in time, through intermarriage with Bantu or Mu-Zenj women, and the interaction of climatic selection, have become Bantu, although still retaining Jewish religious traits and some genetic evidence of the survival of Arab racial characters.

It was these people who formed the dominant element of Zimbabwe at its fall. They were probably much less Bantu in appearance at that time, six hundred years ago. Below them they would have had a helot class with more Bantu, Hottentot, and Bushmen, admixtures in them. Nevertheless, these people as a whole must have become by this time something quite

different in race and ability from their Arab ancestors. This marks the genetic or racial collapse of the Semitic strain and the accompanying economic and industrial decline, with all the consequent weakness which from that ensues. They were sufficiently different, especially when the whole population with its Sotho basis is included, for the contemporary Arabs to think of them as other than white or Arab. That is why Ibn Batuta (1325-1354 A.D.) reported that it was fatal for white men (that is Arabs) to visit the capital, Yufi, at that time. The ancestors of the Lemba, who were the rulers of Zimbabwe, had become Zenj to the Arabs, while they themselves, these rulers of Zimbabwe, still considered the Bantu and their black wives as Senji.

The coming of the Karanga destroyed not only the Zimbabwean civilisation but also its population, which included the Lemba. These Lemba are closely associated with the Venda both in their history and still, to this day, in Vendaland.<sup>10</sup> The Lemba have had some intermarriage with the Venda, so that Semitic features are often seen in the latter. As the rulers of the Venda had the name of BaSenzi, it would appear that they were considered Zenj, and might well be derived from the southern Zenj of Mozambique, who were a mixture of Cushitic, Hottentot, Arab, and, later, of Bantu peoples. The last might have been derived, in part, from the proto-Sothos who, it has been supposed, were the earliest Bantu who settled in Rhodesia and, presumably, Mozambique.

The Venda would, therefore, have originated in Mozambique. This might account for the traditions of the Lemba and Venda having come from Sena, since the history of these two peoples is intimately interwoven. It is, however, our view that the Lemba are more likely to be the only stock who are the survivors of the ancient white people of Rhodesia, and consequently any association they may have had with Mozambique is of secondary importance. It may be that the Lemba fled to the mixed Arab population around Sena or to the Zenj in Mozambique on the destruction of their civilisation, and returned, later, to the Belingwe district of Rhodesia before the migration of Lemba and Venda to Vendaland in the Transvaal.

The Karanga were ruled by the Monomotapa, who became the paramount chiefs of Rhodesia, one of whom first came into contact with the Portuguese. We will deal later with this episode of the Monomotapa and their alleged association with Zimbabwe as recorded in the Portuguese records. Here we shall briefly discuss the Karangan period, to trace the next phase under the Rozvi Mambos.

The Karanga threw out several offshoots, and one branch appears to have intermarried with the Zimbabwean people. From these came the Rozvi people, ruled by the Mambo. The clearly marked Semitic features in many of the Rozvi indicated this descent from a crossing with the Lemba and the Venda (themselves Zenj with Arab and Cushitic blood).

Some<sup>11</sup> students of the subject see a crossing between the ancestors of the Rozvi and the Venda, which may well be the case. According to the traditions of the Venda, from a marriage of the royal families presumably of the Karanga and the Venda, come the Rozvi and the chiefs of the Venda.

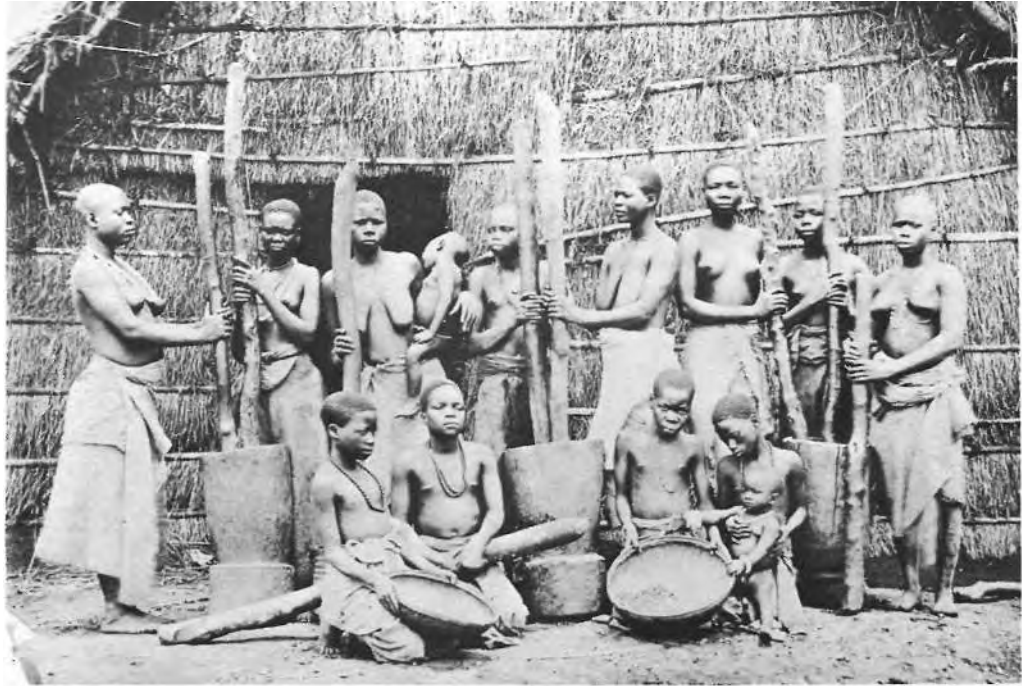


Semitic features of two maKaranga of the last century.

Mullan derives the Rozvi from the Bemba chiefs of Lunda origin in Zambia.<sup>12</sup> Mutwa<sup>13</sup> claims that Bantu tradition derives the Rozvi from a cross between Bantu and others, so that they were regarded as illegitimate. This is consistent with a mating with Venda, who were acculturated at that time to the Lemba, some of whose blood they shared, at a time when the Ba-Lemba were more clearly understood to have been of white origin.

These then were the principal stocks which came together in the collapse of the Zimbabwean civilisation, which was due in part to the introduction of Bantu labour (to be found in the Sotho) followed by the invasion of the Tonga and Karanga peoples. As a result of these events, the stone-built cities of Rhodesia were overwhelmed. The Karanga came into possession. The Lemba, the cross-bred descendants of the Judaized Arabs, fled, and in association with the Zenj in Mozambique, who became the Venda, they retreated before the invaders, fighting to maintain their survival and becoming steadily more Bantuised with each generation. In the course of this, the crossing of Venda with the invaders created the Rozvi, who were destined to supplant the Monomotapa Karanga invaders. The Sotho, themselves with traces of Arabic blood and culture, fled south also. In the course of these events, the "Moorish" Emirs, at Sena in Mozambique, went down before the black Karanga tide, and the Arabs were restricted to the coastal towns such as Sofala, where the Portuguese found them on their arrival at the end of the fifteenth century A.D.

Thus about 1375 A.D. the civilisation which had arisen over a period of more than two thousand years, and which in its material megalithic form had existed for about 800 years, collapsed, and fell into oblivion—to become a subject of speculation and conjecture for every invading European



Typical Negroid Bantu Tonga (a group of Atonga from West Nyasa). The BaTonga arrived earlier than most of the Bantu in Rhodesia.

from the coming of the Portuguese and the British, until, in the course of time, scholarship and science have been able to unravel some of the main threads in this skein of pre-history and proto-history.

While Semitic features are to be found more markedly in some peoples (such as Lemba, Venda, and Rozvi) than others, speaking generally, the whole of the Mashona peoples show traces of them. Of the Makaranga or Makalanga at Zimbabwe, in his time, Bent wrote that they were highly intelligent, handsome, and not at all like Negroes except for colour, many being distinctly of Arab cast of countenance, and he goes on to say: "There is certainly a Semite drop of blood in their veins."<sup>14</sup>

1. **Mullan, James E.** *The Arab Builders of Zimbabwe*. Salisbury, Rhodesia: James E. Mullan, 1969, p.138.
2. **Van Warmelo, N. J. ed.**, *The Ethnological Publication of the Government of South Africa*. Pretoria: Department of Native Affairs.
3. **Sicard, H. v.** *The Origin of the Tribes of the Belingwe Reserve, Nada*, Salisbury, Rhodesia: Native Affairs Department, 1948.
4. **Gayre of Gayre, R.** *The Lembas and Vendas of Vendaland. The Mankind Quarterly*. Edinburgh, vol. 8, no. 1, July-Sept., 1967, p.3.
5. *Ibid.* p.5.
6. **Mullan, The Arab Builders.** . . . . . p.45.
7. **Gayre of Gayre, The Lembas.** . . . . . p.9.
8. *Ibid.* p.14.
9. **Mullan, The Arab Builders.** . . . . . p.16.
10. **Gayre of Gayre, The Lembas.** . . . . . p.3.
11. **Mullan, The Arab Builders.** . . . . . p.71.
12. *Ibid.* p.71.
13. **Mutwa, Vusamazulu Credo Indaba, my Children.** Johannesburg: Blue Crane Books, 1965.
14. **Bent, J. Theodore** *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, London: Longmans Green, 1896, p.56.



## CHAPTER

## 19

The Monomotapa  
and Early Records  
of Zimbabwe

SUPERFICIAL accounts of Zimbabwe imply that the ruler of the Karanga, their "Emir" of the title of Monomotapa who had his capital in Zimbabwe, had built it. In view of the evidence we have reviewed, it is clear that this is incorrect, as the Zimbabwean civilisation is pre-Bantu.

Nevertheless, it is important to review the texts on the basis of which this improbable theory has been built. We call it improbable because, even if we had not the positive evidence we have provided of the actual origin of the people of Zimbabwe being in Arabia, and, to some extent, Ethiopia and Somalia, anyone would be entitled to question such a claim as there is no evidence that the Bantu were ever responsible for megalithic buildings anywhere. Miracles should not be invoked in archaeological and ethnological work. That is what is being demanded of one's credulity when a stock noted for building in thatch and wattle is suddenly endowed by theorists with the great engineering and technical ability to build the megalithic structures of Rhodesia, without any history of evolutionary development from a round or beehive-shaped hut upwards. Obviously, if texts have been interpreted to substantiate the impossible then those texts are being wrongly interpreted.\*

On the 20th November 1506 Diogo d'Alcacova wrote a letter from Sofala to the King of Portugal. From this communication it is clear that the Bantu Karanga, who had representatives at Sofala, allied themselves with the Portuguese against the Arabs on the coast.

This was a natural alignment of interests as the Karanga had already destroyed an alien civilisation in Rhodesia which was related to that of the Islamic Arabs. They could not, therefore, have been well disposed to places like Sofala which were centres of Arab power. For the Karanga the Portuguese occupation of such places would be regarded as an advantage to themselves.

\*Vusamazulu C. Mutwa, makes it clear that the Bantu have no desire to live in towns. If this is their current attitude, it does not make very creditable the attempt to infer they are derived from builders of a great urban civilization. He says—"The Bantu lives best and feels most secure in small, compact villages where everyone knows everyone else and where neighbours can gather under the trees and settle whatever differences they have peacefully." (*Africa is My Witness*. Johannesburg: Blue Crane Books, 1966, p.331.)

From the letter of d'Alcacova to the King of Portugal we learn that the country from whence came the gold was called Veclanga—which is clearly a corruption of Karanga or Kalanga. He says that Zumubany was the place where its king resided. He also tells the Portuguese monarch that the king was the son of Mokomba, and was named Kwesaringa Mena Iotapam, which is obviously Monomotapa.

D'Alcacova, depending on Monomotapan sources for his information, tells of trouble between the Monomotapa and his governor the Ameer (Emir). This is, obviously, a garbled version of the resistance of the "Moorish" governor (Emir) against the inclusion of Sena and Sofala (Mozambique) within the sphere of conquest of the Karanga who had already occupied Rhodesia.

As a consequence of all this, d'Alcacova reports that gold was no longer reaching the coast. The obvious, and more probable, explanation is that the gold producers had been driven out of Rhodesia, as they were then, under Karanga attacks, being driven from Sofala in Mozambique. Mining as such must have been brought to a stop. Only fluvial gold would be washed by the invading Karanga, who had learned at least that technique from elements of the conquered population which they had absorbed. When the Europeans arrived in Rhodesia such panning of gold was still occasionally being undertaken by Bantu, but there was no evidence of their using even the old mine shafts, let alone sinking new ones, at that time.

The Monomotapa had as his capital Zumubany, or Zunhauhy. This is no evidence that this was Great Zimbabwe, despite the fact that so many modern writers suggest that this is where the Karanga paramount chief dwelt. De Barros only 46 years later (writing in 1552), tells us that the Bantu actually stated of Zimbabwe and similar creations that they were beyond their powers to execute, and were the work of the devil.

This is conclusive evidence that they had not built these megalithic structures, as they would have been within the common memory of all had they done so.

Mullan<sup>1</sup> looks upon Zumubany as a corruption of Sa-mu-Banyai, and Zunhauhy is the same but nearer to the modern form of Ba-Nyai rendered in Sotho as Lehoya. The BaNgoya or Lehoya were the first Sotho to reach South Africa. He therefore concluded that the Zunhauhy of d'Alcacova was Sa Nhoya—a town or place of the Ghoya. In this case it infers that the Karanga took over the place-name from their predecessors.

Antonio Fernandes actually penetrated into Central Africa in 1514. He came to the Monomotapa at Embire, a fortress built without mortar, called Camanhaya. This name confirms that of Zumubany as interpreted as Sa-mu-Banya. This was the seat of the paramount chief of the Karanga. Incidentally, it is evidence of the accuracy of the Portuguese accounts in which we are told, for instance, in the account of Father dos Santos (1609), that the people he was discussing were called Mocarangas, that is Karanga, and Antonio Bocarro tells us that there were the chiefs Monguendi and

Makoni, which are the chiefly titles which are still with us among the Shona people.

In the Mount Darwin area (known formerly as Mount Fura, which has been equated by some with the Ophir of the Bible) there are many rough stone-built forts which the writer has investigated on the ground and surveyed from the air in the company of the District Commissioner, Mr. Robert Cunliffe. Any of these could have been the seat of the Monomotapa.

Certainly it is a fact that when the Portuguese arrived, Great Zimbabwe, as far as the Bantu were concerned, was the work of devils. This ignorance of the origins of these great megalithic structures is preserved until the present time, since the wise men of all the peoples living near Great Zimbabwe can neither tell one of traditions of its origins nor can they feel comfortable sleeping in the shadow of its ruins. This we can speak of from personal investigations of headmen in the neighbourhood. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Great Zimbabwe itself was once the residence of a Bantu paramount chief, such as the Monomotapa.

The period immediately following these Portuguese writers was one of considerable confusion. The effective power of the *regime* of the Monomotapa appears to have collapsed between 1560 and 1600. In the east the Morabi or Malabi crossed the Zambezi into Mozambique, and ultimately entered Nyasaland. It is now called Malawi after them. In 1597 the BaZimba, who were cannibals, invaded Rhodesia, but retreated in due course from the Paramount Karanga Monomotapa. In 1602 the Mbiri (Cabires of the Portuguese) invaded Rhodesia, and laid it waste. At the same time there was a revolt among the Karanga against their paramount chief, the Monomotapa, which was put down with Portuguese assistance.

The power of the Monomotapa Dynasty, plagued with attack, was visibly failing. In 1609 the Monomotapa went to live at Chidima under Portuguese protection, where he was provided with a Portuguese bodyguard. The Portuguese continued to support the Monomotapa, but by the end of the eighteenth century his effectiveness as a paramount chief ruling over Rhodesia and parts of Mozambique, had gone. This line of the Monomotapa lasted on there until the period of Dr. Livingstone, but its representative was only a subordinate chief by that time.

The remnants of the Islamic Arabs probably based on Kilwa appear, as might be expected, to have been active during the Monomotapa period, intriguing against the Portuguese.

About 1690 the Rozvi (who were the product of a Karanga and Venda cross) overthrew the authority of the Monomotapa, and so the Mambo of the Ba-Rozvi came to power. Mullan<sup>2</sup> suggests that Arabs still in the country were called upon to help repair some of the "zimbabwes". Be this as it may, the Rozvi, who had a Venda association, would be inclined to show more interest in stone structures than would pure-blooded Bantu. It was probably from the Lemba, by way of the Venda, that the Mambo came to have the Mwari cult, which we have already shown was the worship of a Supreme God whose name includes the Semitic Il, El, or Al, for God.



Above: Grass huts among broken-down derelict walls as found by the Pioneer Column. This indicates that Zimbabwe was a deserted and overgrown relic at that time.

Below: The Shona tribes near Fort Victoria (the Zimbabwe area) were not stone builders. Grass huts were their typical natural dwellings.



We may now turn to the statements which say that the Monomotapa lived at Great Zimbabwe, de Barros (1552) tells us that Zimbabwe was near the oldest gold mine in the Kingdom of Batua, in the country of Torwa, while the Monomotapa lived six days journey away from it.

The Portuguese d'Alcacova (1506) says the Monomotapa lived at Zunhauhy, which appears to have been Zumubany, while Antonio Fernandes (1514) tells us that the Bantu King resided at a fortress built without mortar and called Camanhaya, which appears to be the same name, so we may conclude was the same place. There is some reason to believe that the Monomotapa lived at Mount Fura (Mount Darwin) where, as we have pointed out, there are numerous roughly built stone forts, the walls of any of which could have provided him with stone walls for his Kraal.

Actually, if the Monomotapa lived at Mount Darwin, his seat was further away from the gold mining centre (Great Zimbabwe) than the distance de Barros gave of six days journey. However, it is doubtful how exactly one can take these accounts. The writer was often depending upon second or third hand information, even when he had visited the country. Sufficient to say that the Monomotapa lived some considerable distance from the centre of the oldest gold mines, the centre of which we think is near Great Zimbabwe.

There are some later, and cruder, buildings alongside Zimbabwe. These could have been used by the destroyers of the Zimbabwean civilisation, imitating the state of those they had overthrown. It is likely that the Monomotapa and his followers camped near Zimbabwe (since de Barros tells us that the Monomotapa kept some of his wives there). That they occupied the actual ruins themselves is unlikely, since the Bantu have always had a horror of Zimbabwe of whose builders they knew nothing, and who they considered were devils.

Whatever else we can say, this is certain that there is no evidence that the Monomotapa Dynasty or any other Bantu ever lived in any of these great megalithic cities of ancient Rhodesia.

The Portuguese historian Joao de Barros (1552) summarising information from the early Portuguese explorers, gave a description of Great Zimbabwe. Ortelius published a map of Africa in 1570 which showed a great fortress approximately 500 miles inland from Sofala, which must be Great Zimbabwe.

From this it is quite clear that Great Zimbabwe, as distinct from any seat of the Monomotapa, was already known to the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. As it could not have sprung up suddenly, but must have taken a long time to be built, it can be assumed that it must have existed already for some centuries, at least, before the sixteenth century. This is a further support for the view that the fourteenth century was probably the end of its civilisation.

This is confirmed from the account by the Portuguese Dominican priest, Joao dos Santos, in his book *Ethiopia Oriental*. His testimony is very valuable because he lived in the region. When he wrote in 1609 he must have been reflecting what was known for a fact for a period of, at least, one or two



The condition of the Bantu at Zimbabwe in the time of Theodore Bent.

centuries earlier. What he tells us, therefore, is significant, as he says that there were ruins of walled trading posts which had been used in *olden times* in connection with the extraction of gold. This is a categorical statement by a man who had access to all the information then available, and we know from it that, by this time, (probably the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), the walled depots in the interior were no longer in use.

Complementary to this is the statement of the Jesuit Father Francisco Monclaros, who formed part of Barreto's ill-fated expedition in 1569, who describes the Bantu as he then found them. He says:

"their houses are small straw huts plastered with clay resembling round dovecotes. The land is sterile in parts, but its sterility does not equal their sloth, for even on the well-watered plains which they call 'antevaras' they sow very little, and if there is one among them who is more diligent and a better husbandman and therefore reaps a fresh crop of millet, and has a large store of provisions, they immediately falsely accuse him of all kinds of crimes, as an excuse to take it from him and to eat it saying why should he have more millet than another? Never attributing it to his greater industry and diligence, and very often they kill him and eat all his provisions. It is the same with the cattle and this is the cause of the scarcity. They are not provident but quickly waste and consume the

new crops in feasts and drinking. They do not make use of any kind of animal labour and therefore many came to Sena where we were at the time, and showed much surprise and laughed heartily when they saw the oxen at the plough or drawing carts full of stones for the fort. They dig the earth with small hoes."<sup>3</sup>\*

We have, therefore, contemporary with the establishment of the Portuguese on the coast of East Africa, accounts which tell us of a great fortress and ruined walled *entrepots* for gold exploitation, (which were known to the Arabs as being very old), and, in the same country, the Bantu living in wattle-and-daub (pole and dagga) round or beehive huts (as they have always done) and following a course of life which made the acquisition of capital impossible. Without capital, and without the collaboration necessary to create capital, no great urban and technological civilisation can be achieved.

Therefore, taking these several accounts together, it is clear that the already-ruined civilisation, which foreigners noted in the sixteenth century, could not have been the product of the Bantu then, or at an earlier period. They had not yet arrived at such a state of evolution of society which made it possible for them to be architects and organisers of such immense public works. Even the stupendous nature of the labour involved could not be accepted by any Bantu society, then or now, unless under the lash of the task-master and slave-owner.

The few facts we have given are sufficient to destroy the view of the pro-Bantu school that the major part of the erection of Great Zimbabwe was occurring at this very period, with some work still continuing until much later. The evidence of an archaeological nature cannot contradict that of eye-witnesses. There can be no hesitation, when faced with direct testimony of this kind, that such archaeologists who subscribe to theories that do so are working in a mental vacuum, obsessed with a monomania to establish a theory which requires the ignoring of all the evidence of other lines of enquiry and, so far as the modern protagonists of this school are concerned, the suppression or elimination of the implications of awkward facts such as the carbon-14 tests.

1. **Mullan, James E.** *The Arab Builders of Zimbabwe*. Salisbury, Rhodesia: James E. Mullan, 1969, p.59.
2. *Ibid*, p.121.
3. **Gann, L. H.** *A History of Southern Rhodesia: early days to 1934*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1965, p.21.

\*This is true enough of Bantu character: but it has to be realised that Bantu society has been based not on individualism, and rights of private property, which is a marked feature of the Caucasoid races, but on community of interest (without being communist).



## CHAPTER

# 20

### The Zimbabwe Myth: Misconception of the Century

WE HAVE NOW reviewed the evidence drawn from archaeology, aided by the latest techniques, ethnology, social anthropology, and considerations of religions, taken together with the historical evidence. The whole of the massive evidence which has been adduced, while it rejects a very early "Phoenician" period for the ruins of Zimbabwe and the other great megalithic ruins of Rhodesia, is completely against any modern Bantu origin in the second millennium A.D. The views of the "Phoenician" and the "Islamic" schools fail in the light of the facts, although many of the points they bring forward come close to the truth. The pro-Bantu school is wholly wanting in any merit and, since it is this one which has taken the stage, and whose views are repeated from textbook to textbook and in every popularising account of the proto-historic megalithic civilisation of Rhodesia, it is this myth which must be exploded once and for all if a gross distortion of racial history is not to be perpetuated.

We propose therefore, in this closing chapter, to seize this nettle boldly and to put it in its proper place which is among the myths of mankind which have no place in the rational thinking of scientific man.

It is desirable to recount the origins of this fallacy.

Mr. Roger Summers<sup>1</sup> tells us in one place<sup>2</sup> that Adam Renders first came upon Zimbabwe eighty-five years before, and that a few years afterwards came the German geologist Mauch who "thought he had found the source of the Queen of Sheba's gold," inferring that this story came from him. Later<sup>3</sup> Summers amplifies this remark by saying that a German missionary in the Transvaal, by name of Merensky, informed Renders of these buildings of which Merensky had been told by a Bantu chief. Mauch later visited Zimbabwe in 1871-1872. Mr. Summers then says that Mauch's views about the ruins owed much to the speculations about their origins which he derived from the fertile imagination of Merensky. "Mauch", according to Mr. Summers, "is the modern sponsor of the Queen of Sheba myth about Zimbabwe, a story which seems to have had an Arab origin in the twelfth or thirteenth century."

We are not told by Mr. Summers, in this supercilious and imprecise account, whether he is accusing Merensky and Mauch of a story of their own invention (but it looks on balance as though he is) or whether they derived it from the Arabs.

In any case, the Arabs told the early Portuguese that the story was in their *old books*, so how Mr. Summers can fix on the twelfth or thirteenth century for the origin of the story is quite incomprehensible since no one knows how old these books were. Where is his authority for saying that the story dates from that time? It could be even a thousand years earlier! Mr. Summers, quite frankly, does not know; and so he is himself adding a bit of his own mythology to the account.

If the Arabs knew of such a place (and we know they did, and Mr. Summers' account by implication means they did) then the whole case for the certainty of Bantu origin for Zimbabwe collapses. For Zimbabwe was not isolated from outside influence, and once that is admitted, the claim of an undoubted origin in the Bantu is overthrown without calling upon the mass of evidence we have given against the Bantu theory. How then can anyone write as Mr. Summers does and say under a heading "The truth about Zimbabwe . . . what we see there today was built by native African peoples over a period of 800 years (eleventh-nineteenth centuries): and it is only one of a series of related centres all belonging to one culture and representing a phase of African history that was over before widespread European colonisation began"?

While dismissing the work of Bent,<sup>4</sup> who was sent out by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, as superficial,<sup>5</sup> and that of Richard Hall, who became Curator of the Zimbabwe Ruins,<sup>5</sup> as that of a man who did more harm to Zimbabwe than all his predecessors, Mr. Summers<sup>6</sup> praises the work of David Randall-Maciver who proclaimed<sup>7</sup> that Zimbabwe was a purely African phenomenon. But Randall-Maciver is the one whose knowledge was superficial, not that of Hall, who worked on this subject for sixteen years. Randall-Maciver had been sent out to Rhodesia by the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1905 and he had come, looked, written, and published his book on the subject, by 1906! The writing work alone must have been done at journalistic speed, and could not have been that of a careful scholar. Yet Mr. Summers talks of the work of one of those of whose views he disapproves as superficial! Randall-Maciver knew nothing of the Bantu of Rhodesia, of their ethnology, origins, cultures; and he had no knowledge of the spread of Arab culture to these latitudes (whatever may have been his knowledge of northern Arabs). Who today would treat seriously as *obiter dicta* such pronouncements by one so ill-equipped in his subject? Archaeologist he was, and one of some competence, but in fields other than these. He might as well have been sent to deal with the pre-Mayan civilisation and then to write and report in the same short period of one year. Certainly had he done so, the book today would not be treated as an authoritative work, but as a joke.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

In 1929 the British Association sent out Miss Gertrude Caton-Thompson who wrote her report of The Zimbabwe Culture which, as Mr. Summers says, "substantially confirmed Maciver's view," but he admits that her work appeared to conflict with that of the German ethnologist, Professor Leo Frobenius, who took the contrary point of view. He says "so although archaeologists were completely convinced, to everybody else Zimbabwe was still a problem unsolved."

It is not necessary to accept Mr. Summers' statement as to the convincing nature of the archaeological evidence to agree with his conclusions. Furthermore, we must remind the reader that the problem is not solely an archaeological one. When all is said and done it is a question as to who built (or rather who conceived and directed the erection of) Zimbabwe. That is an ethnological problem, and one on which an ethnologist's views are of more importance, in the end, than those of an archaeologist, if one is forced to make the unfortunate choice between them.

Mr. Summers<sup>8</sup> admits that Miss Caton-Thompson had no support from local oral tradition for a Bantu origin for this civilisation. To get over this insuperable difficulty, he comes forward with what some would consider one of the prize pieces of specious pleading of the century. He makes the fatuous statement that "we know that such traditions do exist but they are esoteric, known only to a few people and extremely difficult to understand."<sup>9</sup> How on earth could the knowledge that their ancestors had raised such mighty works, developed a huge mining industry, had enormous agricultural works in the Inyanga terraces, and imported goods from China, India, Arabia, Venice, and elsewhere, have been lost to the mass of the Bantu if, in fact, their ancestors had been involved in the creation of such a civilisation? We might also ask why some of it has not rubbed off on them in some significant and perceptible manner? Why have we not a people who are still building such works, sinking mines, smelting gold, bargaining with overseas traders for exports of the mineral, and haggling over the quality of imported pottery? Why, when the Europeans arrived, did they find them in their wattle and thatched huts?\*

When we come to study the human remains found in the ancient mines, we do not find typical Negroid Bantu skeletons at all, and this Mr. Summers readily admits. The skeletons are basically those of Bushmen. To get over this difficulty Mr. Summers postulates that the Bantu Iron Age men took Bush wives (which the Bantu have done, as we have shown elsewhere) or the ruling Bantu made slave-miners of the Bushmen, or the Bushmen so liked the Iron Age way of life that they became miners for the Bantu from choice!<sup>10</sup> These explanations are fatuous to the degree of absurdity. Why should the Bantu (who have never been technicians anywhere or at any time in history) perform the role of mine developers, exploiting a Bushman population?

\*In any event, Mutwa, who virtually summarises all the Bantu stories, legends, and myths, and especially those concerning Zimbabwe, to which he refers again and again in his two books, is categorical that Bantu tradition is clear that they did not build it, but it was built by white men who arrived before the Arabs. (Mutwa, Vusamazulu C. *Indaba, My Children*. Johannesburg: Crane Book Shops, 1965; and *Africa is my Witness*. Johannesburg: Crane Book Shops, 1966.)

Surely the obvious explanation is that the mining operations were carried on by Bushmen from the early Iron Age (any time from 200 A.D. until 1100 A.D.) under the direction of technically advanced people, whose terms for the very implements they used the Bushmen adopted, and transmitted later into the racial amalgam of Bush-Hottentot-Negroid, which now constitutes the Bantu people.

Inconsistently with all this questionable pleading for a Bantu origin for the Zimbabwean civilisation, Mr. Summers admits<sup>11</sup> that the older "open stope" method of gold mining is believed "to have been learned from Arabs or Indians." Here again we have an admission which in itself destroys the whole concept of a Bantu origin. For if the mining community used methods adopted from civilised peoples ringing the Indian Ocean, then it is inconceivable that they were not indebted to the same source for their building and engineering techniques. In that case, why suppose that the direction throughout was other than that of former "colonialists", whether Arabs, Abyssinians, or Indians? In any case how did the Arabs and Indians come to teach the Bantu their methods? There is no evidence that in those days there were concepts of helping under-developed countries. Surely not even Mr. Summers, and those who think like him, can believe that the Bantu built ships and sent people to India or Arabia. If the Bantu learnt anything from these sources, it was as slaves. The fact is that when left to themselves they never did anything about mine sinking or significant mining operations of their own volition.

We are told<sup>12</sup> that it was the rivalry between the arriving Portuguese and the Arabs which gave the "African producers their opportunity and to see in Portuguese cupidity an ultimate reason for Zimbabwe's greatest period". Thus, in the passing of the Arab period, after the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast, Zimbabwe's "Golden Age" began. This is so contrary to contemporary accounts that it is almost unbelievable. For instance, the Portuguese, de Barros<sup>13</sup>, published in 1552 an account of Zimbabwe which is a completely convincing description of the building as we now see it.

"In the midst of the plains in the kingdom of Batua, in the country of Toroe, nearest the oldest gold mines, stands a fortress, square, admirably built, inside and out, of hard stone. The blocks of which the walls consist are put together without mortar and are of marvellous size. The walls are twenty-five spans in thickness: their height is not so considerable compared with their breadth. Over the gate of the building is an inscription which neither the Moorish traders (the Arabs of the coast) who were there nor others learned in inscriptions could read, nor does anyone know in what character it is written. On the heights around the edifice stand others in like manner built of masonry without mortar: among them a tower of more than twelve bracas (yards) in height. All these buildings are called by the natives Zimbahe—that is, the royal residence or court, as are all royal dwellings in Monomotapa. Their guardian, a man of noble birth, has here the chief command, and is called

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Symbacao: under his care are some of the wives of Monomotapa, who constantly reside here. When and by whom these buildings were erected is unknown to the natives, who have no written characters. They merely say they are the work of the Devil (supernatural), because they are beyond their powers to execute. Besides these, there is to be found no other mason work, ancient or modern in that region, seeing that all the dwellings of the barbarians are of wood and rushes."

Incidentally, there is confirmation of this chronicler's account where he says that Arabs on the spot were not able to read an inscription at Zimbabwe. For at Render's Ruins, in the Valley of the Ruins, in one corner of these, and at some depth under a Makaranga clay floor, were found glazed pottery with Arabic lettering, an iron lamp-stand and copper chain, an iron spoon, copper snake-rings of non-native character, and several other objects suggestive of Arab occupation. Therefore, it would seem that we have here evidence of Islamic Arab occupation, perhaps after the building period of Zimbabwe, and perhaps lasting on into mediaeval times. Therefore, there were Arabs on the spot who could describe Zimbabwe to coastal Arabs, or who encouraged coastal Arabs to visit them in the interior.

From this account by de Barros, it is clear that some time before 1552, Great Zimbabwe was there as we know it, with a great tower and also buildings on an overlooking height, and that the Arabs could not read an old inscription there. Furthermore, the natives of the Monomotapa, who were living there, did not know who created these buildings which they ascribed to what the Arabs interpreted as the devil. Such is understandable when we realise that building in stone is generally beyond the capability of the Negro.\* Since Arab traders had to know local languages for their business the fact that they could not read the inscription indicates that it was ancient at that time.

How then can Mr. Summers and his collaborators allege, in the face of such a factual and categoric account, that this was the Golden Age of the building of Zimbabwe, when the occupants there said they did not know who built it and they ascribed it to supernatural forces? What is more astonishing is that Mr. Summers, in the face of such a statement, dares to allege: "Later this dynasty<sup>x</sup> was replaced by the Rozvi Mambos whose chief contribution to Zimbabwe was a series of immense walls built with a greatly improved technique."<sup>14</sup> Since we know that the Rozvi people arose after the Monomotapa and can be dated around 1690 A.D., there is no ambiguity in his intention. The Portuguese de Barros (1552) tells us these great walls were standing in his time, and here we have a writer coming along and averring they were built long afterwards. Who is writing myths when clear evidence of this kind is blandly disregarded?

\*Sir H. H. Johnston has drawn attention to the fact that the Bantu ignored the use of stone before the coming of the Europeans. (*The Opening up of Africa*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1923, p.120.)

<sup>x</sup>That is, that of the Monomotapa.

De Barros, himself speculating, decided that this was the Agizymba, south of the Equator, of Ptolemy, to which the Romans penetrated through the heart of Africa.

Alvarez, another Portuguese writer, whose work was translated and published in London, 1600, talks of huge and ancient buildings and among these "is also a mightie wall of five and twenty spannes thick, which the people ascribe to the workmanship of the devill, being accounted from Sofala 750 miles the nearest way." This is as obvious as can be, to any sensible person, a reference to Great Zimbabwe or some analogous place, and even the distance is as near as possible correct, when the circuitous routes that had to be taken at that time are considered. Here again the buildings are so old that the visitors (no doubt Islamic Arabs) are told that the natives can only ascribe them to some hidden and sinister forces.

In order to discredit the damning evidence of the Portuguese, both Miss Caton-Thompson and Mr. Roger Summers have alleged that the Portuguese never penetrated into Rhodesia. Even if this were true, when one finds a writer giving exact facts about a country, facts which are to be checked by our eyes today, it hardly matters at all whether or not the writer was an eye-witness. It is not necessary to visit New York to know it is there. However, these statements of the pro-Bantuist theorists are absolutely untrue. Constantly evidence is coming to light of early penetration by the Portuguese into Rhodesia. For instance, a Portuguese settlement called Dambarare, dated between 1609 and 1692, has been discovered at Mazoe, eighteen miles from Salisbury.

These Portuguese accounts make it quite clear that by the sixteenth century the buildings of Zimbabwe were *antiques*, if not in ruins. The whole elaborate theories of the pro-Bantu school which attribute the final and "Golden Age" stages of Zimbabwe to the eighteenth century, have no warranty in sober fact. They are a chimera of the mind.

The present writer was academically trained as an archaeologist under one of the foremost archaeologists in this century, Professor V. G. Childe, at Edinburgh University, and, under him, was secretary of the Prehistory Society of the University, and acted for a time as his assistant director in excavations carried out by the department of prehistoric archaeology of that university. Therefore there is no bias against archaeology when the present writer rejects as fatuous the so-called archaeological evidence adduced by the Bantu theory school, in the face of clear, nearly contemporary, accounts of eye-witnesses, or of the persons who received the statements of those eye-witnesses.

Archaeology is only, at the best, for history a substitute which attempts to supply gaps where the written evidence does not exist. It is not some "mystique" which nullifies and takes pre-eminence over history. To set it up, as the pro-Bantu theory archaeologists do, as though it can pronounce dogmatic *obiter dicta*, to the exclusion of historical data, is a clear misuse of archaeological method, and a very great disservice to that science. For if it is evident that archaeology can be so blatantly misused where there is

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

historical evidence to the contrary to check it, it can never be trusted to interpret the facts where there is no historical evidence available. The role of archaeology is to supplement, and not to displace, historical accounts.

This one false statement alone, with its claims for the seventeenth to eighteenth century as the "Golden Age" for Great Zimbabwe in spite of the abundant historical evidence to the contrary, destroys the whole line of arguments, specious pleadings, and theories arrived at by the suppression of material facts of an archaeological, historical, ethnological, and anthropological, nature. Mr. Summers refers to the arguments for an earlier origin for Zimbabwe, than that arrived at by his tortuous theories, as a "myth". But it is his interpretation which is proved, time and time again, and in no instance more than in the case with which we are dealing, to be a complete piece of mythology.

Some of the protagonists for a Bantu origin for Zimbabwe throw all caution to the wind in their enthusiasm for the propagation of this mythology, by inferring that the "Golden Age" lasted down even to the nineteenth century. We are told that Zimbabwe was occupied by the Rozvi until 1833, the suggestion behind this being that they were an integral part of the civilisation, not squatters living in thatched huts in or near this megalithic ruin. How untrue this is can be seen from the fact that Andrew Steadman described Zimbabwe as a ruin in or before 1835.<sup>15</sup> Again, the hunter Phillips came upon Zimbabwe in 1870 when it was a completely deserted ruin and overgrown with a heavy (and slow growing) ironwood tree fallen over the walls. In the light of what he saw, he concluded that Zimbabwe had not been occupied for centuries.<sup>16</sup>

Karl Mauch questioned Bantu near the Acropolis about the ruins, and they replied that these had been built by white men when the stones were soft a long time ago. This answer is entirely consistent with the explanations the Portuguese recorders received from Bantu when interrogated on the origins of the ruins.

In the face of the Portuguese historical statements, supplemented by these of the nineteenth century explorers, with the accumulated evidence from numerous disciplines and sciences which we have traversed in this book, we can go further and say that the statement that Great Zimbabwe reached its "Golden Age" about 1700 A.D. under Bantu chiefs is much more than a myth. It is the misconception of the twentieth century. By the foisting of ancient monuments on the world as modern Bantu, prehistoric archaeology has suffered two severe blows from which its credibility will take a long time to recover. Randall-Maciver and Miss Caton-Thompson, through sheer lack of knowledge of African ethnology and general background information (other than that of the mere techniques of archaeology which are an insufficient basis in themselves when they are being interpreted in an intellectual vacuum) fell into serious error. Where Mr. Roger Summers stands (who should know more of the broader basis of the anthropological and historical material than either of the other two persons) we leave it to the reader to judge. We do not say he has deliberately "cooked" the evidence,





An enlargement of a portion of a wall painting found in the Chamavara Cave near Fort Victoria with slight outlining done on the spot, of the principal figure. This shows a woman in Arabic or Indian dress, with upturned boots, trousers and choli (or breast jacket) exposing the midriff.

even if some less charitably disposed persons might infer that. We do not associate ourselves with any such allegations. But we do believe that his pre-occupation with his own completely unproven, indeed, illogical, theory, has caused him, subconsciously, to ignore the facts, although this theory is destroyed every time it is tested at the bar of other sciences or of history.

Here we would refer to Mr. Peter Garlake who, according to a report in the *Daily Telegraph* of London, dated 15th October, 1970, has resigned his position as a Government Archaeologist in Rhodesia to take an appointment in the University of Nigeria, because of Government restrictions against his propagation of views (allegedly supported by carbon-14 tests, which we have shown do not favour a pro-Bantu interpretation at all). The reporter talks of Mr. Garlake's opponents in such a way that the scientists are on the side of Mr. Garlake, and against those who hold the views we are advocating. To

say the least, this is an impertinence, since more qualified and trained scientists have expounded the views which do not accept this pro-Bantu school, from Professors Keane and Bent through to Professors Murdock, Dart, and if one may add oneself as a former professor, the author; these are on the other side. This, however, is typical of the propaganda of this school of thought which, while deficient of real scientific scholarship, calls itself scientific and denounces its opponents as persons without scientific qualifications. The reverse, in fact, is the case. Science is on the side of the scientific men who have interpreted Zimbabwe in the wider context of Africa and Asia, and not on that of those who, for esoteric reasons of their own, persist in perpetrating a valueless myth.

The damage which has been done to archaeology and paleo-ethnology in Southern Africa by the activities of professional archaeologists who have behaved like amateurs with theories to justify, has been incalculable. The typology of artefacts such as pottery, which elsewhere is one of the sheet anchors of investigation in prehistory, has been confused by having been labelled as of a Bantu-period types belonging to horizons centuries before the arrival of the Negroid stocks in this part of Africa. Skeletons have been recklessly called Bantu on the flimsiest evidence. The whole sequence will have to be re-studied and, where necessary, re-classified, so that it is consistent with the actual facts of prehistoric and proto-historic ethnology. It will be necessary to see that it is divorced from the distortions created by this mythology which has twisted everything in an attempt to prove, if that were possible, an obviously untrue, and, indeed, ridiculous, interpretation of events. This Bantu myth is contrary to all we know of the facts of archaeology and ethnology elsewhere, and deliberately contrary to the express evidence of unimpeachable historians and chroniclers.

A new generation of objective prehistorians must now come forward. They must make new excavations, establish accurate typological sequences dated by carbon-14 tests, and then, according to the horizon, make an interpretation of skeletal evidence of an accurate ethnological kind, consistent with what we know of racial distributions, at each level. In this way they will give us the means, where necessary, of re-interpreting the evidence.

Meanwhile, what is urgently needed is that the myth of the Bantu building of the megalithic civilisation of Rhodesia, and of its "Golden Age" in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries A.D., should disappear from the popularising works of archaeology and ethnology and from the encyclopaedias as soon as possible. We suspect that as the information, some of which we have traversed in this book, becomes evident, that is what will happen.

Rhodesia has suffered from being an undeveloped region for archaeological and ethnological research, invaded in brief forays by distinguished archaeologists who, for all that, were more ignorant than learned in this entirely new field. These were followed by local amateurish archaeologists who in some cases have made themselves pundits. They followed, in the first place with awe, the colossal errors of the foragers from abroad, and then

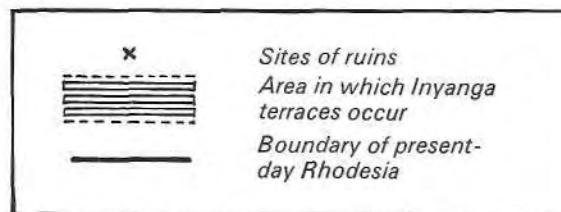
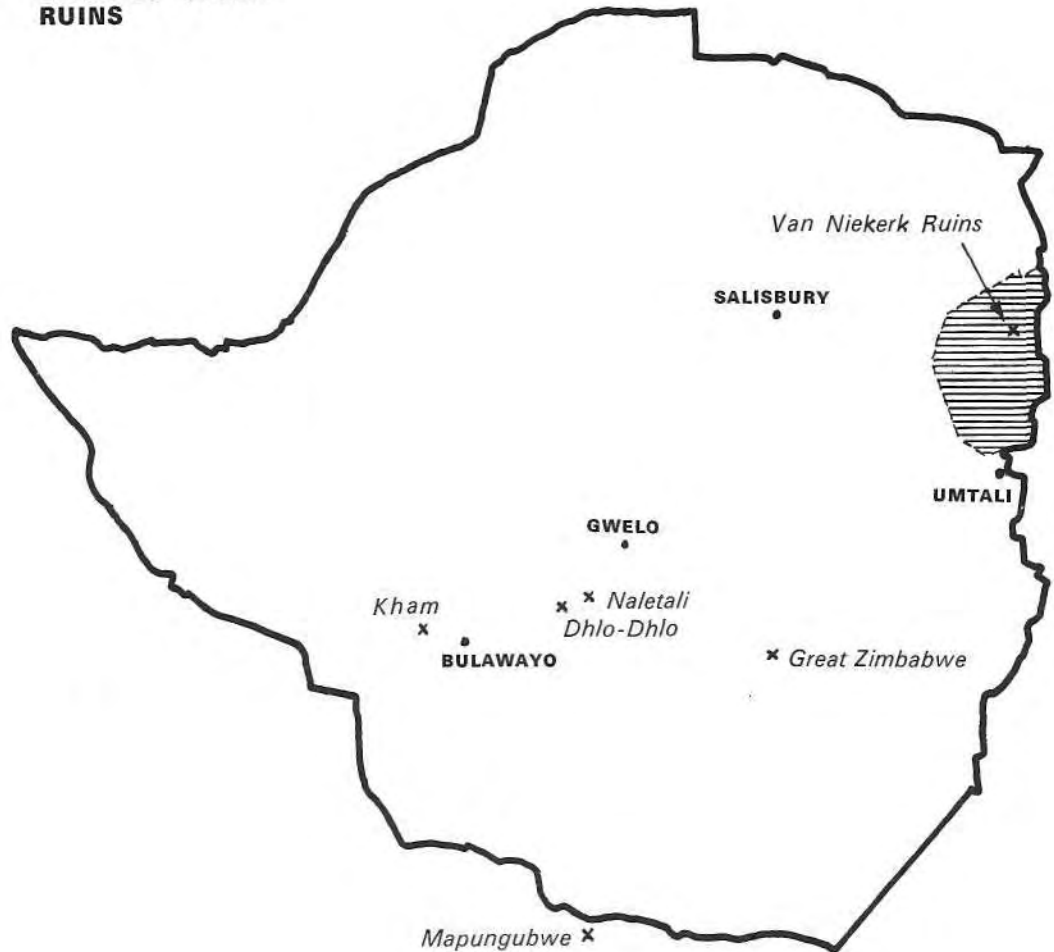
have gone on to justify the misinterpretation of evidence which these outsiders had made. To this extent the monstrous distortion of facts of the Bantu-Zimbabwe myth can be understood, if not condoned.

The obsession to prove a theory can become so great that, unconsciously, all evidence is twisted to justify the thesis. Therefore, although we characterise this myth as the *misconception of the twentieth century* we are quite prepared to believe that it was perpetrated by "hoaxers" unconscious of the false history they were perpetrating. But, for all that, the Bantu-Zimbabwe theory will rank as the greatest error of misinterpretation of our times. It will require much accurate scientific work before archaeology will recover from the harm which has been done. One good thing these distortions may have achieved, as the true facts of Zimbabwe come to be recognised, is the dethronement of the pundits who too frequently in our times have arrogantly dominated the scene.

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## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

### SITES OF STONE RUINS



## APPENDIX



The Ruins at Naletali,  
Khami, Dhlo Dhlo  
and those of  
Van Niekerk

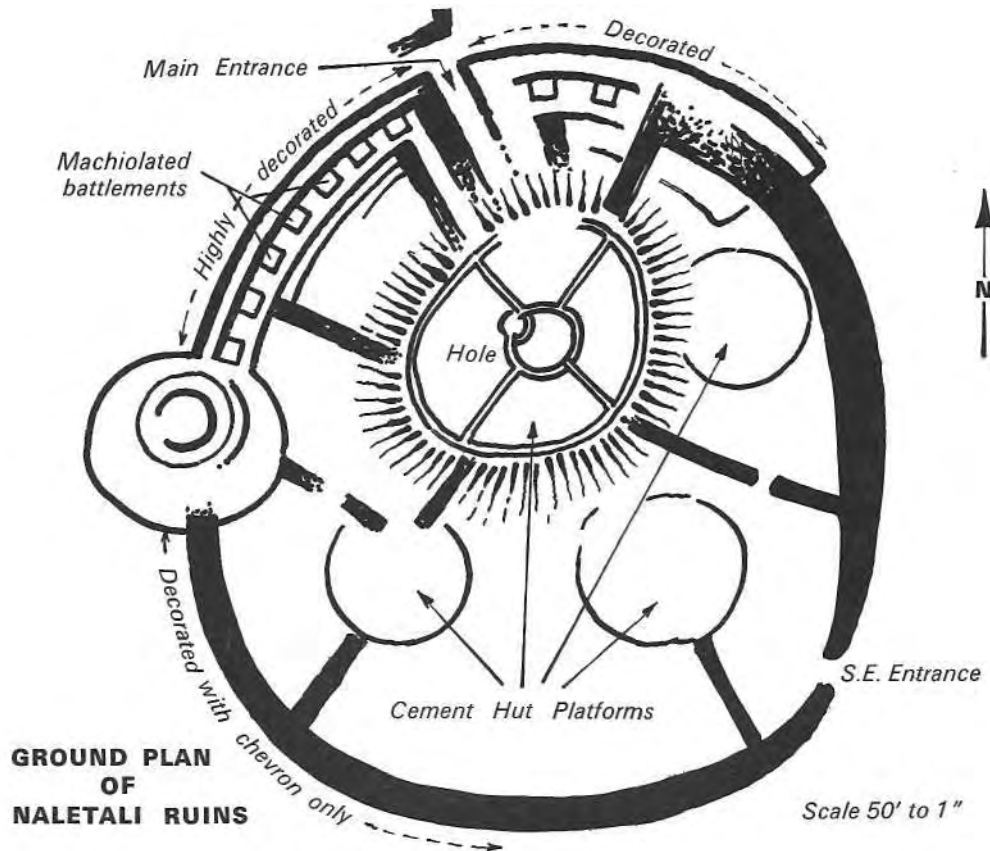
Edmund Layland

Most of our readers will have had access to the accounts of the ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Many will not know as much about the other principal ruins. For that reason the following brief descriptions are given in this appendix.

### **Naletali Ruin**

Naletali, situated about fourteen miles east of Dhlo Dhlo and twelve miles south of Shangani, is a beautiful little ruin, occupying one of the highest points in the neighbourhood. The view from the kopje is superb with the countryside stretching out below. Naletali is small, but its design and decoration make it the most attractive of all the many and diverse stone structures which have been preserved from Rhodesia's ancient past. The whole building is contained within an elliptical wall, 174 feet across its main axis, and varying between 5½ feet and 13 feet thick. On the side of the main entrance the wall rises in tiers like those of the Dhlo Dhlo ruin and exhibits the same characteristic decorative patterns; cord, herring-bone, chevron and chequer-board. The whole structure is decorated in varying degrees, and the building is designed with a symmetry which is superior to the other ruins of this complex. A large bastion or circular platform is sited on the west side of the wall and on it are the remains of a hut with cement walls. The hut is connected by a terrace-walk, along the inner side of the battlemented front wall, with what was the principal hut erected within the enclosure. This hut stands on a massive platform of cement in the northern half and overlooks the top of the girdle wall. Three other hut platforms occupy the rest of the interior and are built on a level about 6½ feet lower than the principal or main hut from which platform stone walls radiate to the outer wall, like the spokes of a wheel, dividing the interior into several compartments.

From the bastion on the west side to a point on the east front, the girdle wall is tiered or terraced, and the top of the wall is ornamented with monoliths and surmounted by nine machiolated battlements, seven on the west and two on the east of the main entrance. The monoliths are small four-sided pillars of unhewn granite and are bedded in cement on the



battlements. On the inside of the terraced wall there are four tiers descending to the level (6 feet lower) of the floor of the enclosure, and between the fourth and sixth battlements, counting from the west, these tiers become a staircase leading to the principal hut. On the outside the wall is in two tiers, the lower of which rises  $3\frac{1}{4}$  feet from the ground level, while the second is set back  $7\frac{1}{4}$  feet from it, and rises  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The battlements give a further height of  $1\frac{1}{3}$  feet to the front. A peculiarity of the main entrance at Naletali and also observed at Dhlo Dhlo, is that the entrance has been blocked with rubble, over which there is a gangway approached by two steps on the west side of the gate. The walls are beautifully built, and the stones trimmed and fitted to obtain the regular courses of this superior masonry which is in a remarkable state of preservation. The ruins are as perfect as if they had been deserted some generations before their discovery, and restoration has improved them still further. The cement walls of the main hut were still standing to a height of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the original floor when first discovered by the white hunters of the nineteenth century. The main hut is a circular building on a stone and cement platform  $8\frac{1}{4}$  feet high, and 92 feet in diameter at the bottom, with a diameter of  $57\frac{1}{2}$  feet at the top level. The walls of this hut are  $1\frac{1}{3}$  feet thick, and a funnel-shaped hole in the floor against the inside

wall opposite to the door, is 4 feet deep and 1 2/3 feet wide at the top. It is carefully constructed of small stones, and the hole or silo pit is sunk in the rubble foundation below the cement floor. This pit is the same shape as the North African underground grain silos, and is therefore of importance in tracing the identity of the builders of the ruins. Very few objects of interest were found in these ruins apart from twisted copper, 'dagga' pipes of soapstone, iron spear heads, and implements, and it is clear that treasure seekers had removed anything of value within a very short time of the occupation of Rhodesia in 1890.

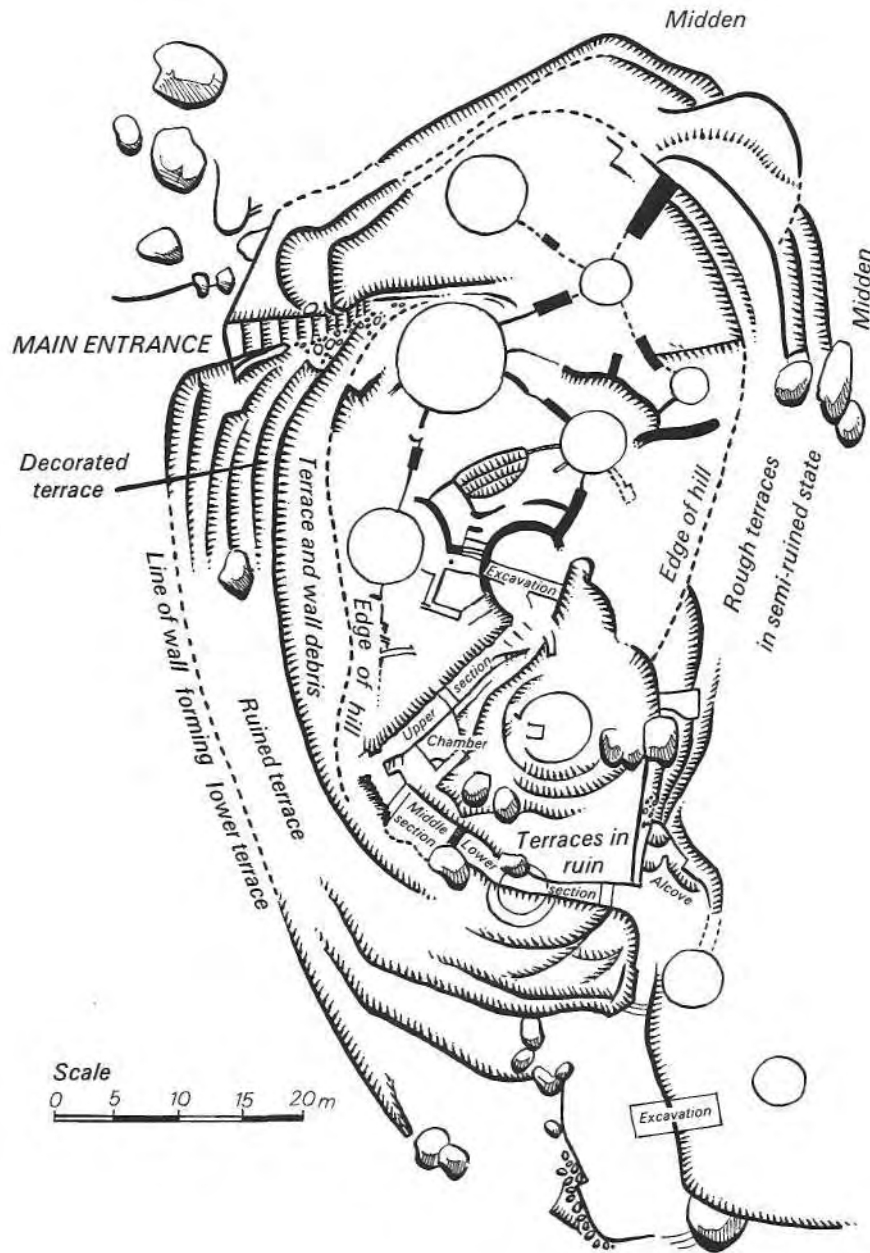
### **Khami Ruins**

Thirteen miles west of Bulawayo, the Khami Ruins are sited on a series of kopjes along the bank of the Khami River. There are fourteen groups of ruined walls, but most of these are of little significance. The principal group, or No. 1 Hill Ruin, stands on a steep cliff on the west bank of the stream and is built on three different levels, one above the other, showing an intelligent use of the rising ground. The three terraces rise in a line from south to north, each level enclosed by stone walls. The contour of the hill determines the shape of the enclosures which are elliptical, with the walls forming irregular arcs.

The citadel or highest level is approximately 197 feet long, and half as wide, with the terraced or tiered walls having the appearance of a fort similar to Dhlo Dhlo, but of inferior construction and ornamentation, and in a bad state of dilapidation when first discovered. The ruin is defended on the western slope by rampart walls, rising in tiers a few feet apart from the foot of the hill to the top, six or seven in all with the chequerboard pattern still visible in places. At the north end of these walls is an entrance passage, approached by the steps, and leading between straight walls to the north-west corner of the citadel. The passage narrows as it ascends and leads direct to the highest point of the ruin, where the remains of a cement walled and floored principal hut with patterns radiating out to the circumference from the central room, as at Naletali, were found. A hut foundation on the middle level showed a similar cement construction, and the external wall of this enclosure is decorated with the chequer-board pattern on the south side. Other hut foundations are located on the lowest level, and the steep cliff on the eastern side of the ruin provides a natural defensive wall of this fort.

Another ruin worthy of mention at Khami is called the Precipice Ruin, or No. 9. It stands immediately above the river on a sheer cliff. The ground on the west side is less steep, and a wall of fine workmanship with regular courses and the chequer-board pattern common to the Khami Ruins, is a feature of this group. The entrance is approached from below by steps cut in the rock, and the thick walls curving round from the entrance enclose the interior platform which forms the heart of the building supported by a retaining wall. The huts in this ruin had cement walls, with floor foundations of rubble and cement. The diameter of the central room is 15 feet in each hut,





**GROUND PLAN OF THE  
KHAMI HILL RUIN**

and walls 18 feet long radiate from this room to a cement ring-wall, dividing the hut into compartments as at Dhlo Dhlo and Naletali (six in the southernmost hut).

Also stone lined bottle shaped pits were found under the floors of huts at the Hill Ruin, as at Naletali, and covered passages found at Khami corresponded to similar passages discovered by Carl Mauch at Zimbabwe.

Objects found at Khami included gold tacks, pieces of beaten gold, gold chainwork, gold wire, gold dust, portions of crucibles, a gold finger ring, an ivory stylo, pottery with Zimbabwe designs of the early period, pieces of melted tin, tin beads, copper beads and bangles, copper and bronze finger rings, copper needles (one threaded with copper wire), copper crucibles, ivory and bone cylinders with Zimbabwe markings, porcelain beads, clay whorls, iron wedges and bangles and numerous flint objects and granite grinding stones.

Under the ancient cemented floors at the lowest levels were found the horns of very small, short horned, oxen, smaller than Guernsey cattle, like a breed of cattle which were common in Ancient Egypt and Babylon and not indigenous to Southern Africa. This also may be said of the Persian sheep which were imported at a very early period in the history of this country. The horns were preserved by the cement which provided hermetical sealing from the action of the weather.

Randall-Maciver visited the Ruins in 1905 and remarked upon the vast extent of the site pointing to the existence of a very considerable population at Khami both inside and outside the stone enclosures.

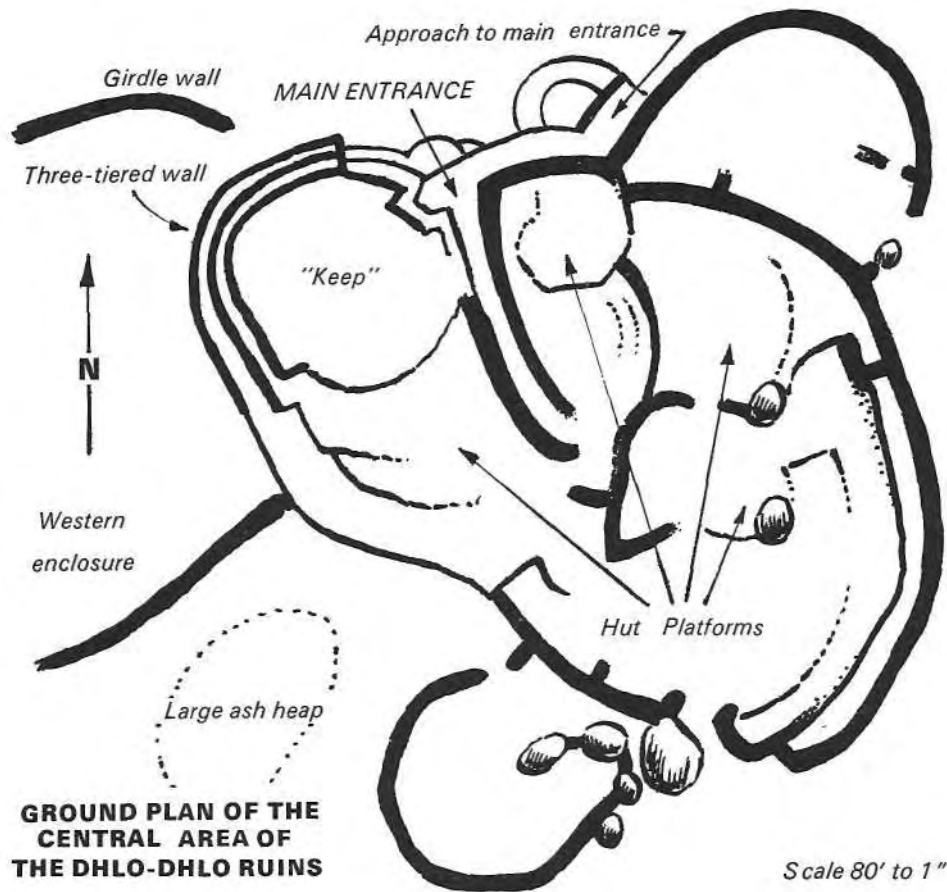
The No. 1 or Hill Ruin was considered by Mr. K. R. Robinson of the National Monuments Commission to be the residence of an important person and finds of a ceremonial nature were made by him. A bundle of five bronze spears, probably cast by the old *cire-perdu* method, and an unusual socketted spear-head was found in circumstances which led to the conclusion that these, together with two small ivory lions from a staff of office and a crescent shaped axe-head inlaid with copper discovered there, were used for a ceremonial purpose.

The ancestral spears and axe were very old and the character of these ancient weapons linked them with the people of the North and distant lands.

Two other ceremonial axes were found by Neville Jones at Khami during earlier excavations in 1934. A stone cross on a flat boulder at what is now called the Cross Ruin marks the grave of an early Portuguese missionary indicating the extent that the Portuguese priests and traders penetrated the country from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century of that time.

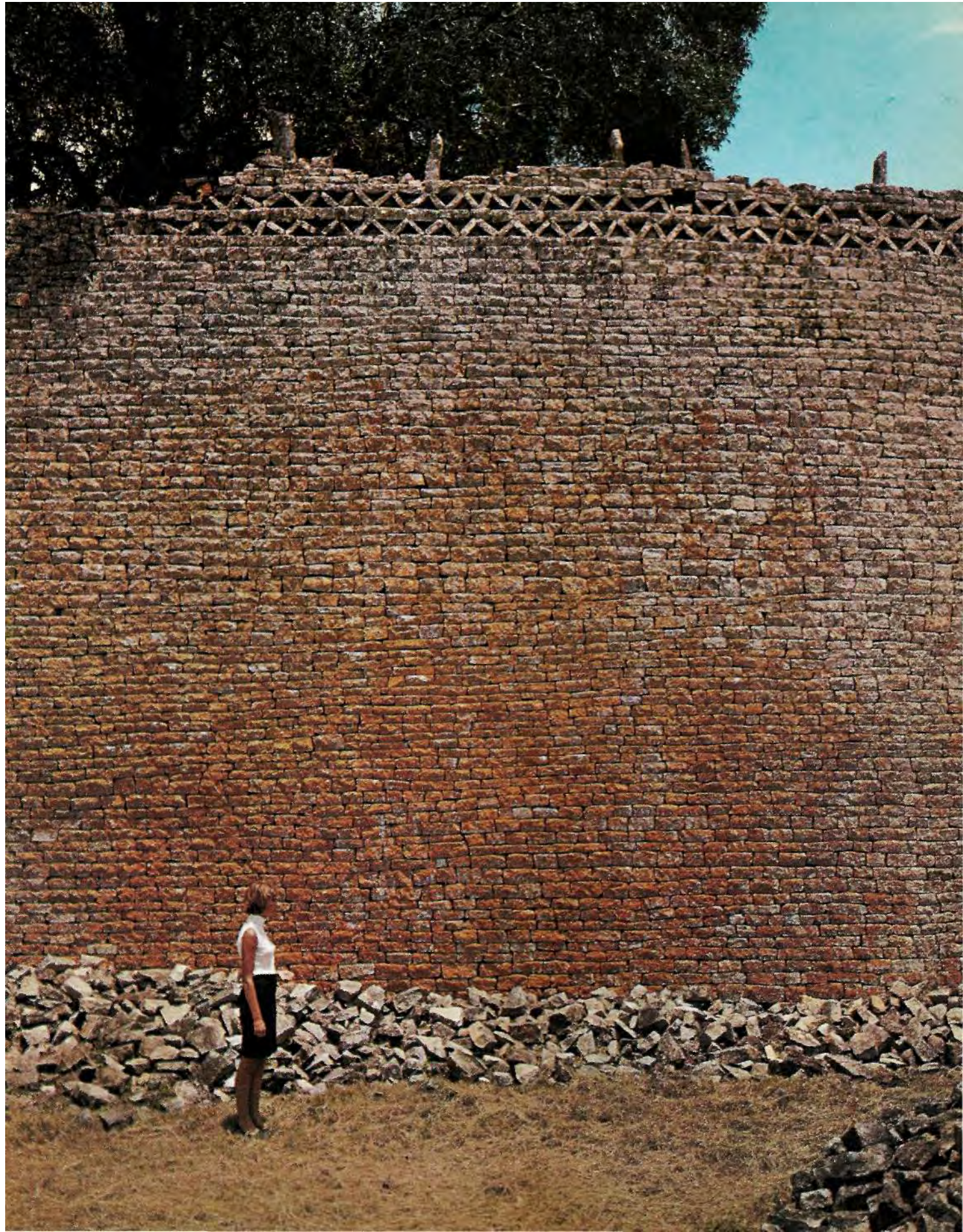
### **Dhlo Dhlo Ruins**

Unlike the majority of the Rhodesian ruins, Dhlo Dhlo is on a high site in sparsely wooded open country lacking in steep kopjes and natural defences, such as found in the Great Zimbabwe area. Situated near Fort Rixon, fifty miles north-east of Bulawayo, the site is easily accessible from the main road to Gwelo and Salisbury. The capital buildings stand upon



the top of a slight slope in the form of a citadel and the general arrangement of the ruins has the appearance of a fortified settlement. A feature of the citadel on its exposed northern and north-western sides is a rampart of three walls rising one behind the other in tiers, indicating a thoughtful attempt by the builders to offset the disadvantages of the site. These defensive walls are built of small granite slabs very regular in size and shape and obviously trimmed to fit into the regular courses of the walls. Mortar was used in some of the walls, and the upper tiers are ornamented with bold patterns inserted in the course. To the east of the main entrance several horizontal bands of serpentine have been introduced in the third tier at intervals of four to five courses. A herring-bone pattern occupies two horizontal courses immediately behind this, in alternate sections of serpentine and granite, with a cord pattern above, while at the top and bottom of the wall the stones have been spaced so as to produce a chequer-board effect. On the western







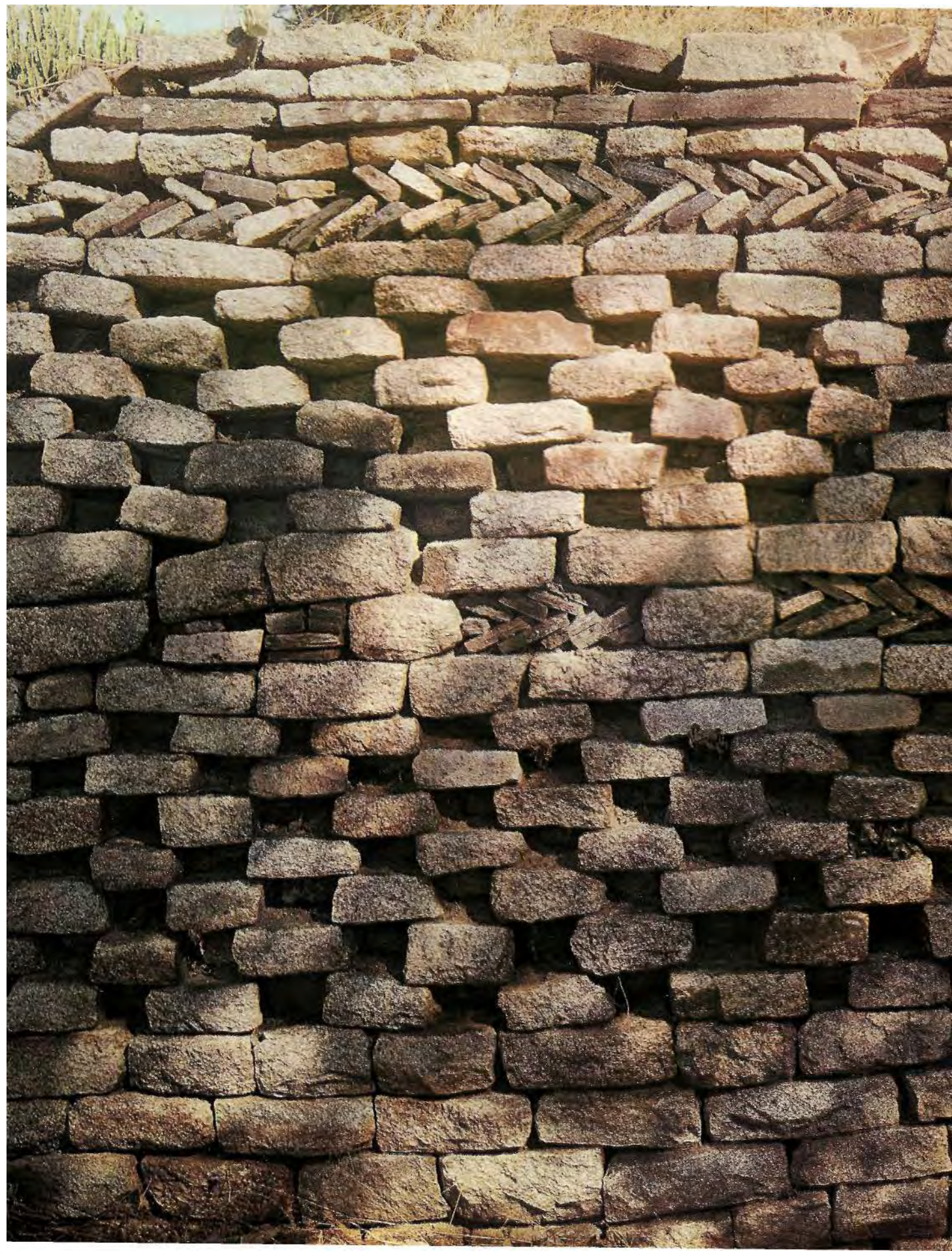


Right: Part of the walling, Dhlo Dhlo Ruins, showing a similar herring-bone design.

Walling of the Nuraghe of Barumini, Sardinia, showing a herring-bone design. Note the narrow laneways between the megalithic structures.













side the same decorations appear on the central wall, but at the point where the western front commences, all three tiers are decorated with variations of cord, chequer-board and chevron designs. The walls of the western front are higher than those of the northern side, the first is nearly 7 feet high and behind it, set back nearly 9 feet, the second tier rises almost 5 feet; behind the second tier, the third and uppermost rises at 6½ feet to over 4½ feet in height.

The citadel is thought to have been constructed first, with the other portions of the settlement growing around it. An integral part of the defences of the fort is a girdle wall which begins at the north-east corner and is continued round the southern side, at a distance of 115 to 295 feet ending at the point on the western face where this single rampart is replaced by three tiers. The girdle wall and tiered rampart form an almost continuous line of defence on the lower ground round the citadel, which occupies the higher level. Two small elliptical enclosures outside the front entrance and a 'keep' by the approach to the main entrance, complete the arrangement, with a large irregular enclosure thrown out on the western side of the 'keep' and a partially ruined out-work on a rock 164 to 197 feet to the north-west of it. The central portion of the 'citadel' ruin is distinguished by the careful masonry work, the decoration and the terracing, in contrast to the later walling and rough buildings constructed of undressed or carelessly selected stones outside the citadel. Cement platforms of huts and workshops are found both inside and outside the 'citadel' and the use of powdered granite instead of clay for this purpose, and the use of mortar in the walling of the citadel, indicates a knowledge of building materials in advance of the rudimentary.

Gold and copper objects in large quantities were found by the earliest investigators of the Dhlo Dhlo ruins and in 1902, Mr. R. N. Hall and W. C. Neal listed the following items of interest found by Messrs. Neal and Johnson: Pieces of gold as large as 6 oz., solid gold beads, stone stamped with the chevron pattern and one as large as 2 oz. 14 dwts.; portion of ancient gold crucibles, twisted gold wire, basket work, gold tacks, gold wire, portions of beaten gold, gold chains, gold wire bangles, cakes of smelted gold, pellets of gold, a bar of iron with gravitating holes for drawing gold wire, pieces of wire still remaining in the holes, several large spear-heads, the metal containing an alloy of gold, portions of pottery of excellent workmanship and bearing the Zimbabwe decorative designs, also soapstone bowls with the herring-bone pattern of the early Zimbabwe period, copper crucibles and blow-pipes, twisted copper wire, basket-work, copper bangles, some with the herring-bone pattern, and twisted wire with copper beads, copper plates, bars of copper, lumps of melted copper, copper needles, iron hoes, wedges, axes, chisels and chains, silver twisted wire bangles, portions of bar silver, silver threaded with silver beads, many pieces of raw silver, sections of a bronze bowl the size of an ordinary washing bowl, and large lumps of smelted lead.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

Evidence of the Portuguese occupation was found in the discovery of two Portuguese cannons, one bronze breach-loader and one iron muzzle-loader, both bearing the Portuguese coat-of-arms; lead bullets, three ancient flint-lock muskets, portion of a brass bugle or trumpet, a gold medallion the size of a five shilling piece, a priest's seal bearing the name Bernabe De Ataide encircling the symbol I.H.S., portions of clay pots with lids and handles, portions of a bronze incense censer, one ball with handle, a broken portion of priest's regalia with mass of molten silver attached, probably the cross, a portion of bell metal, portion of a bronze key, a large silver buckle, section of silver plate embossed with vines, probably Sacrament plate, pieces of embossed silver plate, three feet of gold chain, one pair of gold earrings, a portion of a gold brooch, bronze Egyptian oil lamps, pieces of a finely glazed China bowl, pieces of china, pieces of glass frosted with silver coloured beads, fragments of pottery and an ostrich egg with hole bored in the Bushman fashion.

It is unfortunate that even at the time of Maciver's excavations in 1905, the fortune hunters, treasure-seekers and official investigators had in the preceding fifteen years of the Occupation of Rhodesia, removed everything of value and of real interest, and their importance in dating these ruins was therefore lost to later investigators. However, Messrs. Hall and Neal have provided adequate evidence in their valuable early work "The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia". The discovery of these and other solid gold objects, and also the gold ornaments found in every ancient grave excavated from beneath the granite cement floors at the lowest levels within the Rhodesian Ruins (not the shallow Bantu graves exhumed by the archaeologists in recent years), is carefully recorded, together with the important observation that the pots buried with the Rhodesian skeletons at the deeper levels were beautifully glazed, very thin, and engraved in the best style with the old Zimbabwe patterns, moreover the skeletal remains were laid full length and cemented over in a manner entirely foreign to the traditional flexed position adopted in Bantu burials.

### **The Van Niekerk Ruins—Inyanga**

This extensive area of stone walls, forts, pit dwellings and terraces is part of a huge complex of ruins and agricultural terracing which extends over a vast area in the mountainous eastern region of Inyanga, and in turn is linked with adjacent ruins, near Rusape, Penhalonga, Umtali, Vila Gouveia, and other sites, from the Zambezi escarpment southwards. The Van Niekerk Ruins were first investigated by David Randall-Maciver who was guided there by Major P. van Niekerk in 1905, and Randall-Maciver was so impressed that he was moved to declare that they were the most remarkable which he had ever seen. Commenting upon the size of the ruin, he said, "It is no exaggeration to say that it extends over more than fifty square miles, (the actual size is twenty square miles) and that there are few places within this large area where it is possible to walk ten yards without stumbling on a wall, a building, or an artificial heap of stones". Other visitors have remarked

that, "there has been as much labour expended here as on the building of the Pyramids", and it is clear, that this was in ancient times a densely populated area.

The ruins are situated below the western slope of the 5,700 foot Mount Ziwa, and are a landmark conspicuously higher than any other in the immediate vicinity. The inaccessible upper cliff of the mountain has necessarily been left untouched, but the lofty peak to the north of it is walled to within a few feet of its summit, as are all the minor hills in the area. Generally, a series of walled terraces rise one behind the other in concentric lines a few feet apart until the summit is reached, where the stone walled pits and elliptical dwellings of the ancient inhabitants are found. The stone walls are irregular and follow the natural trend of the ground, using rock features as a natural buttress where these intervene. The rough dry walling without mortar is the method of construction found in most parts of the site with the exception of the hills on the eastern side, where an intermittent use of mortar was observed, but the stones are nowhere dressed or hewn. The building style is the same in all these ruins, and consists of curved walls of rough dry stone walling forming enclosures of irregular elliptical shapes which are divided by other curved walls or by low rings of boulders, with various compartments. The girdle or terrace walls are divided at the bottom of each hill by a boundary wall and each little rise or kopje has its share of ruined walling. Pit dwellings placed upon artificial platforms and others built immediately upon the unlevelled surface of the rock occur frequently and the two principal features of these are the lintelled entrance and the main central circle.

One of the most interesting buildings stands on the western edge of a hill and is placed in a position of great natural strength. It is a true fort, and one of several such buildings, strategically situated on the numerous hills of the van Niekerk site. It has a simple ground plan of one elliptical wall within another, with the much smaller inner oval enclosure abutting in part onto the outer wall so that a simple wall serves the two for some distance, in the same style of construction as other defensive positions in the Inyanga complex of ruins. The outer enclosure is 81 feet by 78 feet and therefore nearly circular; the internal oval is 52½ feet by 29½ feet. The exterior walls average 5 feet in thickness, including the usual banquette, and are in places 8 1/4 feet from the ground. As elsewhere at Inyanga, the masonry is carried over the boulders embedded in the hillside, and there are three entrances in the outer wall. This is also a feature of other forts in the district. A fourth entrance leads from one enclosure to the other. A passage 6½ feet long by 3 3/4 feet high has a socket-hole in the walls on each side to take a wooden beam or bar, stretching across the passage half-way up between lintel and floor. The majority of buildings in the van Niekerk Ruins were once closed in the same way. The outer enclosure of the 'fort' is occupied by circular platforms in which were found some sherds of pottery and some pieces of iron.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

The hand-made pottery found on the site is of course greyish earth strengthened by the addition of powdered quartz, and is of two distinct kinds, the plain domestic more primitive vessels of simple manufacture, and the superior type of pottery, ornamented with geometrical designs incised with the point on wet clay. Randall-Maciver found "a unique fragment showing that the vase to which it belonged was made in the form of an animal, the head and eyes of which were represented by incised lines. Small pottery objects, ivory bracelets, beads, copper coiled wire, numerous iron implements, and iron weapons were also found here, together with what is perhaps the most interesting and significant discovery of all—a number of chipped stone implements found on the surface or at ash-heap level, showing that they belonged to the same period as the pottery and bones. Quartz arrow-heads, and other types of worked stones found in conjunction with weapons and implements of iron representing two distinct ages of man, may indicate a stage in evolution, or a time in history, when iron was introduced by more advanced intruders and superimposed upon the stone age culture of the indigenous peoples; the two peoples apparently co-existed successfully for some time in this remote area of what was then Inyanga's inaccessible



**GROUND PLANS OF VARIOUS  
TYPES OF BUILDINGS IN THE  
VAN NIEKERK RUINS**



mountain region of the unexplored interior of South East Africa. The absence of evidence showing Portuguese trade with the district suggests that the Inyanga settlements were deserted long before the fifteenth century of our time, the subsequent Negro invaders from tropical Africa finding the cold damp climate of the Inyanga uplands scarcely to their liking. The Inyanga people were agriculturalists of a high order and their skilful terracing is still to be seen today over an area of two thousand five hundred square miles.

Randall-Maciver describes their knowledge of irrigation engineering as follows: "The country about Inyanga is well watered, but it would seem that the old inhabitants required a more general distribution of the supply than was afforded by the numerous streams running down from the hills . . . . . The stream was tapped at a point near its source, and part of the water deflected by a stone dam. This gave them a high-level conduit, by which the water could be carried along the side of a hill and allowed to descend more gradually than the parent stream. There are many such conduits in the Inyanga region and they often run for several miles. The gradients are admirably calculated with a skill which is not always equalled by modern engineers with their elaborate instruments. The dams are well and strongly built of unworked stones without mortar; the conduits themselves are simple trenches about 3 1/4 feet in depth. The earth taken out of the trench is piled on its lower side and supported by boulders embedded in the trench. At some points it is possible to see how the old engineers acted when they wished to alter the level of their conduit, suddenly. They adopted the simple experiment of digging a pit, into which the water was conducted and then allowed to issue at the required depth." Some of these irrigation conduits are still used, by the residents of Inyanga, and the intelligent construction and mastery of gradients shown in the planning of these canals indicate a people with an agricultural knowledge far in advance of any of the Bantu tribes of Central and Southern Africa, and more in keeping with the North African and Arabic peoples from whence this knowledge came.

The great age and megalithic character of the ancient Inyanga civilisation is seen in the function of stone monoliths of great antiquity scattered about the Inyanga Downs and Zimbabwe area. Of particular interest is the large granite monolith near the Inyanga-Ruangwe road. This 6 feet 4 inch monument is approached by a lane 500 yards long, and the monolith is of coarse granite which is not found in the immediate vicinity, the local rock being serpentine. No carving nor decoration is to be seen, and the pillar measuring 1' 4 2/3" and 1 2/3" on the cross section, is set in a base of small flat stones. The monolith is estimated to be of very great age, and the presence of similar vertical stelae on the walls of Great Zimbabwe and so many other Rhodesian ruins together with stone phalli and other objects testifying to this ancient megalithic cult, is a clear indication that Inyanga's pits and terraces were part of an early civilisation established in Rhodesia long before the advent of the Central African Negro in the comparatively recent historical period of this second millenium of the Christian era.

## APPENDIX

# II

Table of Comparisons  
between the  
Awwam Temple, Marib, Yemen  
and the Great Zimbabwe Temple

Edmund Layland

### AWWAM TEMPLE, MARIB

### GREAT ZIMBABWE TEMPLE

#### Construction

Dry stone—unroofed

Dry stone—unroofed

#### Plan

Oval kidney shape

Oval kidney shape

#### Height of wall

9,5 metres

9, 5 metres

#### Wall batter

4,12 metres at base

4 to 5,9 metres at base

3,3 metres at summit

3,1 metres at summit

#### Orientation

*Main axis NW-SE.*

*Main axis NW-SE.*

*Short axis NE-SW.*

*Short axis NE-SW.*

#### Wall decoration

At summit only around 1/4 of the better built portion of the wall.

At summit only around 1/4 of the better built portion of the wall.

#### Religious use

Mother Goddess cult embracing worship of sun, moon, stars and fertility gods symbolised in stone monoliths, phalli, etc.

Evidence of Mother Goddess cult, sun emblems, phallic objects and stone monoliths, bird stelae, etc.

(Glaser, E. *Reise Nach Marib*)

The almost identical shapes, orientations, and dimensions of Great Zimbabwe and the Awwam Temple suggest the source from which the ancient Rhodesian builders drew their inspiration. The Awwam Temple at Marib *circa* 750 B.C. was the national shrine of the Sabaen Arabs for over 1,000 years, during a part of which period Southern Arabia controlled East Africa by ancient rights.



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## INDEX

The subject of this book is located in Southern and Central Africa, and concerns Zimbabwe, Semitic peoples and the position of the Bantu in relation to them. Therefore, these words, and similar words of this character, have not been indexed, except where they are qualified by another word which makes it desirable to record them, as they appear with consistent regularity throughout the book.

- Aba-alaba, 163.  
 Abalaba, 163.  
 Aba-Arab, 163.  
 Abhira (mouth of the Indus River), 27.  
 Abu-al-Fida, 173.  
 Abyssinia, 24, 32, 57, 93, 94, 95, 96, 118, 119, 149.  
 Abyssinia, Christian Emperor of, 125.  
 Abyssinians, 41, 96; 215.  
 Abyssinian slaves, 40.  
 Acra (West Africa), 26.  
 Acropolis (Zimbabwe), 72, 78, 84, 102, 115-117, 149.  
 Aden, 168.  
 Adulis, port of, 94.  
 Aethiopians, 141.  
 Africa, East, 42, 66, 84, 88, 91, 120, 128, 132, 135, 149, 163, 165, 174, 211.  
 Africa, Horn of, 15, 16, 95, 120, 141, 165, 166.  
 Africa, North, 49, 66, 139, 149, 166.  
 Africa, West, 65, 82, 140.  
 "African" used inexactly, perhaps for, Bantu, 68, 105, 106, 111, 113, 126, 191, 215.  
 Agatharchides, 89.  
 Agathudes of Alexandria, 170.  
 Agaw stock of Ethiopia, 94.  
 Age, Bronze, 50, 191.  
 Age of Discovery, 45.  
 Age, Iron, 50, 214, 215.  
 Agisymba, 31.  
 Agriculture, terraced of the Sabaeans, 159.  
 A Kai-Tan, 20.  
 Akan, of Ghana, the, 140.  
 Akhnaten, Pharaoh, 24.  
 Akkele Guzay region of Ethiopia, 94.  
 Aksumite Kingdom, 95.  
 Al (God), 207.  
 Alaba, 200.  
 Al-Azd tribe, 35.  
 Al-Biruni, 45.  
 Alexander the Great, 30.  
 Alexandria, 32.  
 Allah, 159, 161.  
 Allahi (Egyptian Arabic for Elohim), 163.  
 Alluvial exploitation of gold, 177.  
 Almaq or lalmaqah, 84.  
 Almaqah, 84, 97.  
 Almug wood, 27.  
 Al-Mukhtara, fortress of Irak, 168.  
 Al-Loatra, lake, 135.  
 Alvares, Jorge, 186.  
 Alvarez, Portuguese writer, 217.  
 Al-Zabadj (Indonesia), 45.  
 Amandebele, 198.  
 Amhara, 95-7, 120.  
 Amsterdam, New, 68.  
 Amwenye Vashava, itinerant traders of the lower Sabi, 135.  
 Anastasius, reign of, 89.  
 Anatolia, 60.  
 Anaximander, 24.  
 Andrews, E. H., at Umtali, 191.  
 Anglo-Saxons, 113.  
 Angola, 29, 34.  
 Annals of Sargon, 88.  
 Anthropology, social, 212.  
 Antigonius, 21.  
 Aqaba, Gulf of, 29.  
 Arab, 18, 21, 33, 34, 35, 36, 44, 45, 62, 66, 91, 102, 114, 118, 201.  
 Arab state of Sofala, 172, 198, 199.  
 Arab glass, 185.  
 Arab-Limi kingdom, 198.  
 Arab colonisation, 16.  
 Arab settlements, 36, 51, 59.  
 Arab Sheik or Sultan of Sofala, 106.  
 Arab ships, 20, 173.  
 Arabia, 27-9, 44, 49, 51, 55, 57, 65-66, 69, 71, 82, 84, 99, 118, 122, 140, 150, 155, 205, 214, 215.  
 Arabia, Southern, 84, 91, 93, 95, 109, 122, 125, 139, 142, 149, 170.  
 Arabia, south-west, 51, 93, 94, 95, 126, 170, 194.  
 Arabia, Shamsi, Queen of, 88.  
 Arabic explorers, 88.  
 Arabic, Islamic explorers, 88.  
 Arabian Nome in Egypt, 139.  
 Arabic, 34, 36, 128, 159, 163, 170, 216.  
 Arabic dress, 40.  
 Arabo-Cushitic Zenj, 168.  
 Arabs, 37-38, 40, 115, 128, 161-163, 167, 169, 170, 174, 175, 179, 201-202, 205, 211, 213, 215-216.  
 Arabs, Islamic, 90, 116, 159, 162, 174-175, 199, 207, 217.  
 Arabs, Judaized, 94, 134, 172, 174, 203.  
 Arabs, Moslem, 114-115, 128.  
 Arabs, Sabaean, 21, 90, 119, 128, 132, 135, 142, 175, 194.  
 Arabs, Yemeni, 162.  
 Armenoid, 140, 144.  
 Artemidorus, 89.  
 Aryans, 144.  
 Aryan Hindus, 149.  
 Ashtar, 96.  
 Ashtoreth, 141.  
 Asia Minor, 54, 98.  
 Assyria, 139.  
 Assyrian inscriptions, 88.  
 Astarte, 141, 144, 155.  
 Astragali, 193.  
 Astrology, Chinese, 21.  
 Athar, 96, 141, 142, 155.  
 Athens, 22, 89.  
 Atlantic peoples, 149.  
 Atlas Mountains, 77.  
 Aufer, 27.  
 Australoid racial type, 93, 98, 166.  
 Axum, 41. (See also Axum and Axsum).  
 Awwam, Temple of, Marib, 84.  
 Axsum, 94-96, 109, 120, 121.  
 Axum, 41, 120. (See also Auxum and Axsum).  
 Azania, 51, 55, 65-66, 89, 91, 166.  
 Azores, 27.  
 Baal, 144, 194.  
 Baal Pehor, 150.  
 Baal worship, 150.  
 Babylonia, 77, 159.  
 Baines, Thomas, 50, 177, 179.  
 Balearic Islands, 71.  
 Ba-leba, 200.  
 Ba-lemba, 96, 162, 200.  
 Bali, 164.  
 Balid-ez-Zenj (Land of the Zenj), 165.  
 Bambandyanalo on the Limpopo, 104.  
 Bangi, Persian for hashish, 68.  
 BaNgoya (or Lehoya), 206.  
 Bantu bird symbol, 140.  
 Bantu-Jewish Arabic matrix, 132.  
 Bantu language, 40.  
 Bantuized, Zenj population, 167, 169.  
 Bantu, Negroid, 45, 104.  
 Ba-Nyai (Lehoya), 206.  
 Baraytuma, 43.  
 Barreto's expedition, 210.  
 Barumini, Nuraghe of, 72.  
 BaSenzi, 202.  
 Basuto, 63.  
 Batua, Kingdom of, 209.  
 Batuta, Ibn, 35, 173, 174, 175, 202.  
 Bay, Delagoa, 38.  
 Bay, Mossel, 38.  
 Bay, St. Helena, 38.  
 Bay, St. Paul's, Malta, 22.  
 BaZimba (cannibal Bantu), 207.  
 Beam, soapstone, from Great Zimbabwe, 77.  
 Bedsha, dialect of north-east Africa, 141.  
 Beer-making, 66.  
 Bemba chiefs of Lunda, 203.  
 Benecke, Hannah, 194.  
 Benin, Bight of, 34.  
 Bent, J. Theodore, 52, 65, 139, 157, 177, 181, 191, 193, 194, 213, 220.  
 Berber tribes, 145, 146.  
 Bhang, Indian hemp or hashish, 69.  
 Bharat, 42, 136.  
 Bharate, (See Bharat).  
 Bible, 88, (Biblical sources), 150, 161, Bilkis, Queen, 84.  
 Bilquis, Harem of, 84.  
 Bilquis, Temple of, 84.  
 Bird symbol, Bantu, 140.  
 Bird, hawk-headed god symbol, 99.  
 Bird, Babylonian storm god, 139.  
 Bird symbol, falcon, 140.  
 Bird, Zimbabwe, 65, 99, 139, 140.  
 Bishop, a Mongol, 60.  
 Black Jews, 94-96.  
 Black stone of Mecca, 66.  
 Boats, "sewn", 65.  
 Boeotia, Greece, 185.  
 Book of the Dead, 144.  
 Borgame, central African lake, 43.

# THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

- Borneo, people of, 66, 172.  
 Boscawen, W. St. Chad, 139.  
 Boskop-Bush type of population, 104.  
 Bowen, R. Le Baron, 106.  
 Bowl, Persian, 188.  
 Britain, Phoenician trade with, 193.  
 British Association for the Advancement of Science, 213, 214.  
 British Isles, 27, 49, 66.  
 Britons, 68, 173.  
 Britanny, 68.  
 Brochado, Costa, 40.  
 Bronze, 50, 51.  
 Bronze Age, 50, 191.  
 Bronze Age cup, 193.  
 Bruwer, A. J., 109, 157, 191, 194.  
 Buildings, Sumerian, 77.  
 Bullock, Charles, 161, 162.  
 Burton, Richard, 145.  
 Bushfolk, 38, 96.  
 Bushmen, 50, 55, 122, 168-169, 173-174, 201, 215.  
 Bushmen-Hottentot, 41, 110, 113, 115, 162.  
 Bushman's River (Rio do Infante), 37.  
 Cabires (Portuguese for the Mbiri), 207.  
 Cairo, 32, 44.  
 Camanhaya, residence of the Bantu king, 209.  
 Cameron, Commander, 36.  
 Cameroons, 56.  
 Canton, China, 89.  
 Cape Agulhas current, 19, 33.  
 Cape Correntes, 19.  
 Cape of Good Hope, 15, 19, 38, 43.  
 Cape of Storms (Cape of Good Hope), 19, 60.  
 Cape Verde Islands, 37.  
 Cappoids, 34, 55, 60, 93, 113, 168, 169.  
 Cappoid-Hottentot, 169.  
 Carbon-14, (dating) evidence, 106, 110-111, 114-116, 121, 126, 134, 190, 197.  
 Carracks, Portuguese, 185.  
 Carthage, 109, 194, 195.  
 Carthaginians, 30, 193-194.  
 Cash, Chinese coins, 60.  
 Catholic Archbishop of Peking, 60.  
 Caton-Thompson, Gertrude, 105, 106, 114, 162, 189, 190, 214, 217.  
 Caucasoids, 33, 42, 43, 66, 68, 93, 94, 98, 100, 144, 150, 166, 175.  
 Caucasoid traits or elements, 134, 175.  
 Caucasoid genes, 95, 132, 134.  
 Caucasoid-Cushitic stock, 167.  
 Caucasoid Hamitic peoples, 140.  
 Caucasoid-Negroid crosses, 128.  
 Celadon ware, 185-186, 188, 189.  
 Celts, 138.  
 Cerne (or Kerne), 26.  
 Ceylon, 17, 52, 57.  
 Chalcolithic period, 191.  
 Chant, Lemba, 35.  
 Charibael (Kariba-il), ruler of Zafor, 125.  
 Chevron pattern, 102.  
 Chidima, in Mozambique, 207.  
 Chiefs, Paramount, 198, 206, 207.  
 Child, V. Gordon, 87, 139, 217.  
 China, 18, 30, 45, 52, 55, 60, 90, 185, 214.  
 Chinese, 19, 44, 68, 98, 122.  
 Chinese ports, 44.  
 Chinese coin, the cash, 60.  
 Chinese Hottentots, 60.  
 Chinese junk, 19.  
 Chinese Ming ware, 60.  
 Chinese settlers, 88.  
 Chinese ships, 20, 186, 188.  
 Cholas dynasty, 60.  
 Chosroes II of Persia, 41.  
 Christian Emperor of Abyssinia, sixth century, 125.  
 Christian Ethiopians, 134.  
 Chum Ruin Mine, 104.  
 Cirato, kafa, meaning iron, 135.  
 Circumcision, 131, 144, 145, 150, 153.  
 Clan, falcon, 141.  
 Cleopatra, 27.  
 "Clicks", Hottentot, 168.  
 Code, Mosaic, 96.  
 Common white jasmine, 55.  
 Comoro Islands, 95, 96.  
 Compass, 20, 21.  
 Concentric circles motif, 156.  
 Congo, 40, 55, 57, 113, 121, 146, 201.  
 Constantius II, 89.  
 Copper, 49, 50, 51, 216.  
 Copts, 96.  
 Cord pattern, 102.  
 Cornwall, pre-Celtic, 149.  
 Coromandel coasts of India, 52.  
 Correntes, Cape, 19.  
 Cosmas Indicopleustes, 41.  
 Cotton, 52, 63-64.  
 Cranes, Three, at Mecca, 159.  
 Cremation cemetery at Tarxien, 191.  
 Crete, 139.  
 Cuama River (Zambezi) 37.  
 Cunliffe, Robert, District Commissioner, 207.  
 Current, Cape Agulhas, 19, 33.  
 Cushites, 168.  
 Cushitic peoples, elements and influence, 43, 57, 63, 66, 68, 88, 91, 100, 122, 135, 140, 150, 165, 169, 174, 202.  
 Cushitic-Hamito peoples, 100, 106, 120, 136, 168.  
 Cushitic-Hottentots, 201.  
 Cyrus the First, of Persia, 54.  
 da Costa, A. L., 105.  
 da Gama, Vasco, 37-38, 40-41, 174.  
 Dahl, O. C., 66.  
 Dahomey, 145.  
 Dalriada, Kingdom of, 102.  
 d'Alcavova, Diogo, Portuguese writer, 174, 205, 206, 209.  
 Dam, Great, of Marib, 89.  
 Darlington, C. D., 57, 63.  
 D'Arnaud, 89.  
 Dart, R. A., 43, 60, 103, 104, 111, 117, 136, 220.  
 David, King of Israel, 95.  
 de Barros, 206, 209, 216, 217.  
 Delagoa Bay, 38.  
 Delta, Nile, 141.  
 de Mendonça, Cristovao, 44.  
 Dendema, market town in Sofala, 172.  
 Dentelle pattern, 77.  
 de Novaes, Bartolomeu Dias, 37.  
 de Sequeira, Diogo Lopes, 44.  
 de Sequeira, Gomes, 44.  
 Dhat Himyam (Shams, the sun-goddess), 97.  
 Dhlo-Dhlo, 68, 102-103, 109, 119, 126.  
 Dhow, Arab, 59.  
 Dhú Nuwas, ruler of Saba, 89, 90, 94.  
 Diana's Vow (Rhodesia), 159.  
 Dimashqui, Arab writer, 162, 173.  
 Diodorus Siculus, 193.  
 Djentama, market town in Sofala, 172.  
 Doro, beer, 66, 69.  
 Dorado, El, in relation to Ophir, 119.  
 dos Santos, Joao, 36, 206, 209.  
 Dowra, beer, 66, 69.  
 Dravidian peoples, 144.  
 Drystone "dyking", 71.  
 Du Nuwas (Dhu Nuwas), 90.  
 Duma, Arabia, 78.  
 Dunadd, capital of Dalriada, 102.  
 Dyen I, 66.  
 "dykes", drystone, 71.  
 Dhzata, in Vendaland, 79, 200.  
 Ea, Babylonian god of the deep, 77.  
 Eagle, diety of fertility, 139.  
 East Africa, 42, 66, 84, 88, 91, 120, 128, 132, 135, 136, 149, 163, 165, 174, 211.  
 Easter, Goddess, 138.  
 East Indies, 52.  
 Eborata, 42, 136.  
 Edrisi, 20.  
 Edwards, Felford, 180.  
 Egypt, 15, 26, 43, 51, 82, 98, 99, 101, 145, 150, 156, 163, 195.  
 Egypt, bird symbol in, 139-142.  
 Egyptian, 98, 139, 149, 153.  
 Egyptian falcon, 65.  
 Egyptian ingot mould, 105.  
 Egyptian-Nubian peoples, 98.  
 Egyptian papyri, 105.  
 Egyptian religion, 144.  
 Egyptian, Book of the Dead, 144.  
 El (God), 161, 207.  
 Elamite languages, 141.  
 Elamitic Hurrian peoples, 141.  
 Elamitic Kassites, 141.  
 El-Banes (in the land of Sofala), 172.  
 El Dorado, Ophir the, of King Solomon, 119.  
 Elohim (God), 163, 172, 174.  
 Elohim, Tau Ka, 173.  
 Elohim, Morwa Ka, 173.  
 Emozaid Arabs, 114, 162, 163.  
 Eudoxus, 27.  
 Eritrea, 15, 194.  
 Errohim, (God), 163, 172.  
 Erthraean Sea, Periplus of the, 94, 165.  
 Ethiopia, 15, 32, 42, 44, 49, 55, 68, 88-89, 97, 98, 99, 100, 109, 118, 120, 121, 122, 138, 168.  
 Ethiopia, Falashas in, 94-97.  
 Ethiopia Oriental, book of Joao dos Santos, 209.  
 Ethiopians, 41, 45, 89, 90, 94, 95, 97, 121, 149, 170.  
 European, Indo-peoples, 66.  
 Evans, J. D., 77, 191.  
 Exotic food plants, introduction to Africa of, 55.  
 Falashas, 94-97.  
 Falcon clan in the Nile Delta, 141.  
 Falcon, Egyptian, 65, 142.  
 Falcon, female, of goddess Hathor, 139, 141-142, 155.  
 Falcon of Athar, 142.  
 Falcon of Hathor-Athar, 142.  
 Falcon of Horus, 155.  
 Falcon sun god, 155.  
 Falcon symbol, 99, 140.  
 Feast of Purim, 95.  
 Fenton, Ferrar, 27.  
 Figurines, Umtali, 191.  
 Fortress of Al-Mukhtara, 168.  
 Fura, Mount (Mount Darwin), 207.  
 Galla, 136, 141.  
 Calleys, 17-18, 21, 31.  
 Galloway, Dr., 104, 116.  
 Gallus, Aelius, 30.  
 Game of isafuba, 65.  
 Garden of Eden, 24.  
 Gardiner, Captain, 104, 117, 190.

# INDEX

- Garlake, Peter, 111, 219.  
Gaurani, 36.  
Gaury, Gerald de, 82.  
Gedi, 28, 59, 60.  
Genesis, 24, 28, 82, 144.  
Genoese trading stations, 60.  
Germans, ancient, 138.  
Gerrhaens, people associated with Sabaeans, 170.  
Ghana, 59.  
Ghana, Akan of, 140.  
Ghee (clarified butter), 31.  
Ghoya, a town, 206.  
Glaser, E., 140.  
Glass, Arab, 185.  
Goa, 30.  
God, 161, 162, 198, 173, 207.  
God, Supreme, (See God).  
God of the Deep, Ea, 77.  
Goddess, Eater, 138.  
Goddess, Mother, 84, 141.  
Gold, 24, 26, 27.  
Gold coast, 194.  
Good Hope, Cape of, 19, 38, 43-44, 60.  
Grange, New, in Ireland, 156.  
Great Dam of Marib, 89.  
Great Lakes (of Africa), 42, 110, 136.  
Greece, Thebes in, 60.  
Greek vessels, 37.  
Greeks, 30.  
Guinea, Gulf of, 17, 26, 38, 40.  
Gytte, 26.  
  
Hadhramaut, Wadi, 84, 91, 162, 163.  
Hadramut, 91.  
Hadramis, from Wadi Hadhramaut, 84.  
"Hairy Women", 26-27.  
Hal Safien, Hypogeum at, Malta, 157.  
Hall, R. N., 52, 103, 104, 126.  
Hamadani, the Arab geographer, 84.  
Hamites, 93, 145, 149, 150, 170.  
Hamites, Eastern, 43.  
Hamitic elements, influences, 68, 99, 136, 139, 144.  
Hamitised peoples of Ethiopia, 93.  
Hamito-Cushitic peoples, 100, 106, 120, 136, 168.  
Hamito-Semitic peoples, 99, 149.  
Hamitic White Libyans, 150.  
Hanno, 26.  
Harem of Bilkis, 84.  
Harems of India, 30.  
Hathor, 139, 141, 142, 155.  
Hathor-Athar, falcon of, 142.  
Havilah, 24, 28.  
Hawk-headed bird god symbol, 99.  
Hawk of Horus, 139.  
Heaven, Queen of, 144.  
Hebraic-Jewish beliefs, 95.  
Hebrews, 30, 96, 163.  
Hebrew name for God, 163.  
Hebrew tradition and influence, 66, 95, 125, 172.  
Hellenised Egyptian influence, 94.  
Helwan, 65.  
Herodotus, 26, 141.  
Herring-bone pattern, 102.  
Hesiod, 144.  
Hibernian Scots, 102.  
Himyar, founder of Himyaritic dynasty, 89.  
Himyaritic King, 94.  
Himyaritic towns, 91.  
Hindubar, land of the Hindu, 165.  
Hindus, 41, 42.  
Hindus, Aryan, 149.  
Hinduism, 164.  
Hindustani, 36.  
  
Hippalus, Pilot, 18.  
Hiram, King of Tyre, 27, 28, 51, 91, 95, 109, 119.  
Holdich, T. H., 90, 91.  
Homburger, L., 42.  
Homer, 141.  
Hommel, Fritz, 140, 159.  
Horn of Africa, 15, 16, 95, 120, 141, 165.  
Horus, 65, 139, 141, 142.  
Horus, Hawk of, 139.  
Hottentots, 35, 38, 41, 103, 117, 122, 168, 173, 174.  
Hottentot-Bushmen, 41, 110, 115, 162.  
Hottentot-Cappoid strain, 169.  
Hottentots, Chinese, 60.  
Hottentot "clicks", 168.  
Hottentot-Cushitic-Mediterranean crosses, 198.  
Hova of Madagascar, 43.  
Hyksos, 24.  
Hypogeum at Hal Safien, Malta, 157.  
Hyrax Hill, 42.  
Hurri, 141.  
Hurrians, 140, 141.  
  
Ialmaqah, (Venus), 84.  
Ibibio, West Africa, 146.  
Ibn Batuta, Arab writer, 35, 173-175, 202.  
Ibn Zaid, 173.  
Ibo tribe of Nigeria, 146.  
Idol, Maltese, 191.  
Idrisi, Arab writer, 35, 42, 43, 45, 136, 163, 172, 173.  
Idumaeans Jews of the Red Sea, 95.  
Iggetti, goddess of the Yoruba, 146.  
Il-God, 161, 207.  
Ilhas do Ouro, 34.  
Ilu or Allah, 159, 161.  
Ilumquh, Temple of, 84, 159.  
Incense, sources of, 84.  
India, 17, 18, 20, 41, 51, 55, 57, 65, 71.  
India, harems of, 30.  
India, sixteenth century Portuguese Governor of, 44.  
India Tertia, 42.  
Indian bhang, 69.  
Indian ships, 19, 35, 37, 41.  
Indian Theophilus, 89.  
Indians, 31, 42, 45, 88, 135, 172, 215.  
Indianised town in east Africa, 43.  
Indicopleustes, Cosmas, 41.  
Indies, East, 52.  
Indonesia, 43, 55, 59, 65.  
Indonesian Malay, 43.  
Indonesians, 43, 44, 45, 55, 172.  
Indo-European, 66.  
Influence, Jewish, 89, 125.  
Influence, Moslem, 118.  
Influence, Persian, 59.  
Ingots, for casting metal, 193, 194.  
Ingot mould, Egyptian, 105, 193.  
Ingram, W. H., 42, 136.  
Inscriptions, Assyrian, 88.  
Inyanga, 86, 89, 119, 126, 156.  
Irak, 77.  
Iran, 156.  
Iron, 44, 135.  
Iron Age, southern Africa, 50, 214-215.  
Ironwood tree, 218.  
Irrigation at Inyanga, 89.  
Irrigation in Saba, 89.  
Irwin, Constance, 31.  
  
Isafuba, game of, 65.  
Ishtar, goddess Astarte, 89, 141.  
Isis, ship, 22.  
Islam, 90, 94, 149, 159, 161, 164, 174.  
Islamic Arabs, 90, 116, 159, 162, 174, 175, 199, 207, 217.  
Islamic Arabic explorers, 88.  
Islamic ceramic wares, 106.  
Islamic civilisation and traces of it, 66, 132.  
"Islamic" school on origin of Zimbabwe, 212.  
Islands, Balearic, 71.  
Islands, Cape Verde, 37.  
Islands, Comoro, 95, 96.  
Islands, Philippine, 30.  
Isles of Zabag, 172.  
  
Jacob's Pillar, 150.  
James, Henry, 193.  
Japan, 185.  
Jasmine, common white, (*jasminum officinale*), 55.  
Jasmine, Arabian (*jasminum Sambac*), 55.  
Java, 164.  
Jehovah, 150.  
Jericho, Walls of, 37.  
Jerusalem, 95.  
Jewish-Arabs, 134.  
Jewish, Bantu, Arabic matrix of beliefs, 132.  
Jewish influence, 89, 90, 125.  
Jewish rites and customs in Ethiopian Christianity, 94, 95.  
Jewish religious motifs, 118.  
Jewish traits, 161, 173, 201.  
Jews, 30, 96.  
Jews, Black, of Abyssinia, 94-96.  
Jews, Idumaeans, 95.  
Johnston, H. H., 82.  
Jones, Neville, 117.  
Jordanus, 42, 136.  
Josephus, Flavius, 22, 30.  
Judaica, 62.  
Judaized Arabs, 94, 134, 172, 174, 203.  
Judaized religion, 164.  
Judaized Sabaeans, 90, 97, 125, 126, 138, 164, 195.  
Judaism, 94, 95, 96.  
Jukun, West Africa, 146.  
  
K2 level at Mapungubwe, 104, 117.  
Kalanga people, 198, 206.  
Kalmak, Arabic for sandalwood, 27.  
Kanbulu, Madagascar, 35.  
Karanga tribe of Rhodesia, 157, 198, 202-203, 205, 207.  
Kariba, 68.  
Kariba-il (Charibael), 125.  
Kariba-ili-Water, Priest King of Saba, 68.  
Karoi, 111.  
Karoi Ingombe Ilede people, 113.  
Katanga, 163.  
Keane, A. H., 165.  
Keith, Arthur, 141.  
Kenya, 15, 16, 33, 43, 44, 49, 52, 57, 59, 89, 136, 167.  
Kenyan coast, 32, 51, 166.  
Kenyon, K. M., 162.  
Khami, 109, 119.  
Khami-Fal, 68.  
Kharabit, King of Saba, 31.  
Khartoum, 32.  
Khoisan peoples, 35.  
Kilwa, 28, 35, 51, 59, 172, 173, 207.  
Kilwa, King of, 40.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

- King of Axum, 41.  
 King David, 95.  
 King, Himyaritic, 94.  
 King of Narseh, 41.  
 King of Portugal, 205, 206.  
 King Solomon, 51, 88, 91, 95, 109, 114, 119, 120.  
 King of Tyre, Hiram, 27, 28, 51, 91, 95, 109, 119.  
 Kingdom of Batua, 209.  
 Kingdom of Meroe, 94.  
 Kingdom of Dalriada, 102.  
 Kings, Sabaeen, 89.  
 Kirkman, Mr., Fort Jesus Museum, Mombasa, 60.  
 Knossos, 37.  
 Knuckle bones (astralagi), 193.  
 Kosher, 131.  
 Kraal of the Ovambo, compared with Zimbabwe, 82.  
 Krishna, the Hindu God, 41.  
 Krogman, Wilton Marion, 141.  
 Kronos, 144.  
 Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty of China, 185.  
 Kushites, 141.  
 Kushitic languages, 141.  
 Kwekhena (Hottentots), 35.  
 Kwearinga Mena Iotapam (the Monomotapa), 206.
- Lady of Punt (Hathor), 141.  
 Lake Ngami, 35.  
 Lake Nyasa, 32, 35, 42, 136.  
 Lake Tanganyika, 198.  
 Lake Victoria, 42, 43, 136.  
 Lakes, Great, of Africa, 42, 110, 136.  
 Lakshmi, Indian goddess, 30.  
 Lamu, 28, 51.  
 Land of the Hindu, 165.  
 Land of the Limi, 174.  
 Land of Ophir, 27, 49.  
 Land of Punt, 24, 26.  
 Land of the Zing (or Zenj), 41.  
 Language, Elamite, 141.  
 Languages, Kushitic, 141.  
 Languages of Madagascar, 66.  
 Languages, Nilotic, 42.  
 Lateen fore and aft rigged sail, 19.  
 Lehoia (or BaNgoya), 206.  
 Lemba, (or Ba-Lemba), 65-66, 68-69, 92, 96, 128, 131-132, 135, 153, 157, 163, 175, 199, 200-204.  
 Lemba chant, 135.  
 Lemba, loan-words, 135-136.  
 Lemons, wild, in Mazoe valley, 52.  
 Leoathe (meaning sea), 135.  
 Lesotho (Basutoland), 60.  
 Levitical Code, 131.  
 Leyrana, a town in Sofala, 173.  
 Libby, W. T., 111.  
 Libya, 82.  
 Libyans, white, 158.  
 Life, Lord of, 77.  
 Limi (meaning God), 171.  
 Limis, the country of, 174.  
 Limpopo River, 41, 42, 104, 109, 116, 119, 136, 169, 174.  
 Lindi, 172.  
 Lion, title of certain Bantu chiefs, 173.  
 Livingstone, David, 200.  
 Llumquh of Siw, 68.  
 Loather River, 135.  
 Loeb, on the Ovambo peoples, 66.  
 Lord of Life, Babylonian god Ea, 77.  
 Lower Sabi Valley, 135.  
 Lucian, 22.
- Lunda, Bemba Chiefs of, 203.  
 Lyons, Council of, 60.  
 Maayan people, 66.  
 Maayan tongue, 172.  
 Maciver, David Randall, 101-107, 191, 213.  
 Makoni's country, 69, 207.  
 Madagascar, 19, 28, 32, 33, 34, 43, 55, 59, 65, 66, 135.  
 Madagascar, Hova of, 43.  
 Madagascar, Straits of, 59.  
 Madeira, 27.  
 Mahomet, the Prophet, 159.  
 Magnet, Chinese reference to, 20.  
 Maidens, Zulu, 63.  
 Makalanga (Kalanga), 204.  
 Makaranga (Karanga), 204, 216.  
 Makorekore, Mashona, 113.  
 Malabi, 207.  
 Malabar, 20, 30, 32.  
 Malacca, 164.  
 Malagasy people, 34.  
 Malawi, 207.  
 Malay, 122, 172.  
 Malay-Indonesia, 43.  
 Malayo-Polynesians, 34.  
 Malaysia, 65.  
 Malindi, 28, 34, 36, 41, 43, 44, 51, 76, 150, 176, 172.  
 Malta, 77, 109, 139, 191, 193.  
 Malta, megalithic civilisation of, 157.  
 Maltese idol, 191.  
 Maltese temples, 77.  
 Mambo, 202, 207.  
 Maneno Unguya dialect of Swahili, 36.  
 Manicaland, 69.  
 Maphoritis (Ma'afir), Governor of, 89.  
 Mapungubwe, 41, 104, 116, 117, 119, 126, 190.  
 Mapungubwe skulls, 117.  
 Marconnes, F., 36.  
 Marib, Great Dam of, 89.  
 Marib, in Saba, 82, 84.  
 Marib, Temple of, (Awvam), 84.  
 Mashona (Shona peoples), 204.  
 Mashonaland, 91.  
 Masai, 42.  
 Masudi, Arabic writer, 35, 41, 167, 169, 170, 173.  
 Matabele, 50.  
 Mauch, Carl, the German geologist, 212, 213, 218.  
 Mauros, Fra, 43.  
 Mazoe Valley, 52.  
 Mazofe, probably Yufi, 174.  
 Mbanje, (Karangan word), 69.  
 Mbirata (word in a Lemba chant for a metal), 135.  
 Mbiri (Cabires of the Portuguese), 207.  
 Mead, 66.  
 Mecca, Black stone at, 66.  
 Mediterranean, 20-21, 24, 26, 49, 55, 59-60, 66, 140, 191, 195-196, 198.  
 Mediterranean crosses, Hottentot-Cushitic, 198.  
 Megalithic standing stones, 76, 149.  
 Megalithic civilisation of Malta, 157.  
 Megalithic temples of Malta, 156.  
 Melitta, 26.  
 Men-an-tol stone, Cornwall, 149.  
 Menuhotep III, 24.  
 Merensky, a German missionary, 212.  
 Mendonça, Cristóvão de, 44.  
 Menelek, mythical son of Solomon and Queen of Sheba, 95.  
 Merchantman, Indian, 19.  
 Meroe, Kingdom of Nubia, 63, 94.  
 Mesopotamia, 51, 156.
- Messina Copper Mines, 174.  
 Meyerowitz, Eva L. R., 140, 141, 142.  
 Middle Predynastic graves, 139.  
 Milton, J., the poet, 29.  
 Ming, Chinese ware, 60, 185-186.  
 Ming Dynasty, 188.  
 Mishnah, Jewish, 95.  
 Mkulunkulu, Zulu for God, 170.  
 Mogadishu, 36, 165.  
 Mohammed, the Prophet, 90.  
 Moklandjalou, Zenj name of God, 170.  
 Mokomba, father of the Monomotapa at the time of d'Alcova, 206.  
 Mombasa, 15, 16, 36, 52, 170, 173.  
 Mongol Bishop in the thirteenth century, 60.  
 Mongoloid women, 33.  
 Monguendi, Chief, 206.  
 Monsoon, north-east, 32.  
 Monsoon, south-west, 33.  
 Monomotapa, 155, 198, 202-203, 205-207, 209, 215-216.  
 Montclaros, Francisco, 210.  
 Monuments, Moslem, 77.  
 Moors, 38, 40, 206.  
 Moorish merchants or traders, 36, 215.  
 Morabi, 207.  
 Morwa ka Elohim (God), 173.  
 Morwa wa Ka Limi, seSotho name of God, 170.  
 Mosaic Code, 96, 131, 134, 159, 163, 200.  
 Moslems, 90, 99, 134, 172.  
 Moslem influence, 118, 173.  
 Moslem (or Islamic) Arabs, 114-115.  
 Moslem monuments, 77.  
 Moslems, Orthodox, 163.  
 Moslem power in East Africa, 88.  
 Moslems, Swahili, 36, 91, 122, 128, 132, 134-135, 162, 164, 166-170.  
 Mossel Bay, 38.  
 Mother Goddess, 84, 141.  
 Mount Darwin (Mount Fura), 207, 209.  
 Mountains, Atlas, 77.  
 Mountains of the Moon, 31.  
 Mozambique, Sheik of, 40.  
 M'toko's country, 69.  
 Mauli (or Muari) the powerful High God, 157, 159, 161.  
 Mudros pillar of Phoenicians, 150.  
 Mulambe, 172.  
 Mullan, James E., 69, 113-114, 128, 161-163, 170, 172-174, 198-200, 203, 206, 207.  
 Müller, D. M., 84.  
 Mulunga (Lemba for white man), 200.  
 Murdock, G. P., 55, 65, 66, 91, 220.  
 Murray, Margaret A., 42.  
 Musendji (plural Basendji), Karangan for Barbarian, 163, 201.  
 Musenji (used by Lemba for Bantu women), 201.  
 Musoni, Lemba greeting, 163.  
 Mutwa, 203.  
 Muvhi, Freddie Ambani, 131.  
 Mwenye (a name for the Lemba and Indians), 135.  
 Mycenae, 24, 77, 191.
- Nabothians, 30.  
 Naletale Ruins, 109, 126.  
 Nankin china, 102.  
 Narseh, King of Persia, 296 B.C., 41.  
 Natal, 40.  
 Naudi people, 136.  
 Naville, E., 139.  
 Ndoraba people, 136.  
 Necho II of Egypt, 26-27, 51, 109, 119, Neckham, Alexander, 20.



- Negroid Bantu, 45.  
 Negroid women, 33.  
 Neolithic period of flat idols in the Iberian peninsula, 193.  
 Nestorian monk, Rabban bar Sauma, thirteenth century, 60.  
 New Amsterdam, 68.  
 New Grange, Ireland, 156.  
 N'gami, Lake, 35.  
 Nicholas IV, thirteenth century pope, 60.  
 Nieburr, 32.  
 Niekerk Ruins, 102.  
 Nigeria, Yoruba of, 146.  
 Nile, Indian reference to the, 43.  
 Nile Delta, 141.  
 Nile, White, 17.  
 Nile, Upper, 82.  
 Nilo-Hamitic, tribes, 43.  
 Nilotic languages, 42.  
 Nîmes, France, 155.  
 North Africa, 49, 66, 139, 149, 166.  
 Nubia, 93, 98-100, 135.  
 Nubians, 63, 98-99, 136.  
 Nuraghe of Barumini, 72.  
 Nuraghi of Sardinia, 71, 77, 109.  
 Nyasa, Lake, 32, 35, 42, 136.
- Ocean, Indian, 17, 18, 20, 26, 30, 34, 36-37, 41, 44-45, 52, 88, 91, 164, 170.  
 Ocean, Pacific, 44.  
 Ocean, Zingion, 41.  
 Olopan, from Judaea, 62.  
 Oman, 35.  
 Ophir, Land of, 27-30, 36, 37, 49, 207.  
 Osiris, 144.  
 Ottoman Sultans of Persia, 185.  
 Outrigger vessels, 59.  
 Ovambo people, 66, 68, 82.
- Pacific Ocean, 44, 52, 55.  
 Papyrus, Egyptian, 105.  
 Paramount Chiefs (the Monomotapas), 198, 206-207.  
 Paul's Bay, Malta, St., 22.  
 Paver, B. G., 49.  
 Peking, 60.  
 Penis, erect, 145.  
 Penis, circumcised, 150.  
 Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 26, 31, 65, 89, 94, 166, 167, 169, 170.  
 Persia, 51, 57.  
 Persian language, 66, 103.  
 Persian Bangi, 69.  
 Persian pottery, 185, 188.  
 Persian Gulf, 20, 51.  
 Persian architecture, 77.  
 Persian influence, 59.  
 Persians, Shirazi, 42.  
 Persians, 21, 41, 45.  
 Persians, Sassanian, 41.  
 Phallic symbols and phallicism, 73, 76, 142, 144, 146, 149-150, 153, 155.  
 Pharaoh, Akhnaten, 24.  
 Pharaoh, Menhotep III, 24.  
 Pharaoh, Necho II, 26-27, 51, 109, 119-120.  
 Pharaoh Sahu-Ra, 24.  
 Philip, The Fair King of France, 60.  
 Philippine Islands, 30.  
 Phillips, Wendell, 84, 91.  
 Phoenicia, 150, 194, 195.  
 Phoenician circumnavigation of Africa, 194.  
 Phoenician King Hiram, 91.  
 Phoenicians, 21, 24, 27, 30, 31.
- Phoenician trade with Britain, 193.  
 Picard, Collette, 26.  
 Picard, C. Gilbert, 26.  
 Pilot Hippalus, 18.  
 Piraeus, Port of, 22.  
 Pliny, the Elder, 30, 89, 155.  
 Pole and dagga (wattle and daub) huts, 211.  
 Polo, Marco, 31, 32, 33, 34.  
 Polynesia, 59.  
 Polynesians, 20.  
 Pompeii, 30.  
 Pondicherry, 30.  
 Portolano Laurenzano, 26.  
 Ports, Chinese, 44.  
 Portuguese, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, 68, 103, 135, 157, 161, 174, 179, 180, 204, 205, 206, 211, 213.  
 Portuguese Carracks and mariners in Chinese waters, 185.  
 Portuguese Governor of India (sixteenth century), 44.  
 Portuguese records, 101, 206, 217.  
 Portugal, King of, sixteenth century, 205, 206.  
 Poseidonius, 27.  
 Pottery, Siwa, 103.  
 Pottery, Persian, 185.  
 Predynastic graves, Middle, 139.  
 Priest-King of Saba, 68.  
 Ptolemy, 167, 169, 217.  
 Ptolemy IV, 21.  
 Ptolemy's Map, 31.  
 Punt, Lady of, 141.  
 Punt, Land of, 24, 26, 28, 142.  
 Punt, a second, 142.  
 Puranas (sacred Indian scriptures), 43, 136.  
 Purim, Jewish Feast of, 95.
- Quae Quae (Hottentots), 35.  
 Queen of Arabia, Shamsi, 88.  
 Queen Bilkis, 84.  
 Queen of Heaven, 144.  
 Queen of Sabaeen Sheba, 91.  
 Queen of Sheba, 68, 88, 91, 95, 108-109, 114, 119-120, 194, 212.
- Ra, Egyptian god, 144.  
 Rabban bar Sauma, Nestorian monk, 60.  
 Rachewiltz, Boris de, 153.  
 Radio-carbon 14-dating, 106, 110-111, 114-116, 121, 126, 134, 190, 197.  
 Randall-Maciver, D. (See Maciver, D. Randall-).  
 Redan, in the Transvaal, 194.  
 Red Sea, 16-20, 26, 51, 91, 95, 195.  
 Regent Um Nombata, a chief of the Matabela, 50.  
 Religious motifs, Jewish, 118.  
 Renaudot, Eusebius, 20.  
 Renders, Adam, 212.  
 Rhapta, a port between Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam, 166.  
 Rice, 57.  
 Rift Valley, 17.  
 Rigged, square vessels, 17-19, 21.  
 Rio do Infante (Bushmen's River), 37.  
 River Thames, 60.  
 Riyadh, Arabia, 77.  
 Robinson, K. R., 115, 116.  
 Romans, 18, 30, 31, 98.  
 Roman vessels, 17-18, 22, 37.  
 Rome, 150.  
 Rosvi, 68, 82, 202, 207, 216.
- Ruins, Naletale, 109.  
 Ruins, Niekerk, 102.
- Saba, 21, 37, 51, 68, 88, 89, 91, 94, 95, 121, 125, 128, 155, 159, 162.  
 Saba, Priest-King of, 68.  
 Sabaeen elements, 68, 136, 156, 159, 163, 171, 174, 194, 195.  
 Sabaeen Arabs, 21, 89, 90, 119, 128, 132, 135, 142, 175, 194.  
 Sabaeen Kings, 31, 89.  
 Sabaeen Queen of Sheba, 91.  
 Sabaeen religion, 89, 96, 97.  
 Sabaeen Goddess, Shams, 89.  
 Sabaeen temples, 89.  
 Sabacans, 89-91, 96-97, 100, 120-121, 126, 138, 142, 155, 159, 170, 194-195.  
 Sabaeans, Judaized, 126, 138, 195.  
 Sabaeo-Himyaritic period, 89.  
 Sabi, 28, 37, 119.  
 Sabia, 37, 89, 90.  
 Sadiqi (Sadiq), 163.  
 Sahara, 15.  
 Sahil, Arabic for coast, 35.  
 Sahu-Ra, Pharaoh, 24.  
 Sail, lateen, 19.  
 Said (or Sayid or Zaid), 114, 162.  
 Saint Helena Bay, 38.  
 Sajid (or Zaid), 163.  
 Sakti or Uma, wife of the god Siva, 149.  
 Samarra, in Irak, 77.  
 Sa-mu-Banyai (Zumubany and Zuhauhy), 206.  
 Samsun (the sun), 194.  
 Sanskrit, 42.  
 Santos, Joao dos, 36, 206, 209.  
 Saphor (Zafor), 125.  
 Saracen geographer, Edrisi, the, 20.  
 Sardinia, Nuraghi of, 71.  
 Sargon, Annals of, 88.  
 Sasos, Land of, 41.  
 Sassanian Persians, 41.  
 Sayouna, people of, 42, 45.  
 Schlomann, Miss, 135.  
 Schofield, Mr., archaeologist, 117.  
 Science, Arabic, 21.  
 Scots, Hibernian, 102.  
 Scyphus pot, Trojan, 60.  
 Seligman, C. G., 42.  
 Semien region, 94.  
 Semites, 93-94, 105-106.  
 Semitic influence, 68, 93.  
 Semitic Amhara, 96.  
 Sena (probably Sayouna), 42, 45, 163, 173, 198, 202.  
 Sequeira, Diogo Lopes de, Portuguese Governor of India, 44.  
 Sequeira, Gomes de, 44.  
 "sewn" boat, 65.  
 Seyuna, 163.  
 Shams, Sabaeen sun-goddess, 89.  
 Shamsun, sun-goddess, 155.  
 Shamsi, Queen of Arabia, 88.  
 Sharma, a mountain mentioned in the Puranas, 43.  
 S'harna (City of Tarma), 136.  
 Sheba, 28, 68, 89, 125.  
 Sheba, Queen of, 37, 68, 88, 95, 108, 109, 114, 119, 120, 194, 212.  
 Sheik of Mozambique, 40.  
 Shem, the peoples of, 28.  
 Shinnie, Margaret, 166.  
 Ship, Arab, 20.  
 Ships, Chinese, 20, 186, 188.  
 Ships, Indian, 19.  
 Ship, the Isis, 22.  
 Shirazi Persians, 42.  
 Shona (Mashona), 52, 65.

# THE ORIGIN OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CIVILISATION

- Sicard, H.v. 42, 43, 45, 134, 135, 136.  
 Sin, moon-god, 97, 155, 194.  
 Sinai, a mining region, 139.  
 Siouana, in Sofala, 172.  
 Siva, Hindu god, 149.  
 Siwa pottery found at Inyanga, 103.  
 Skeletons, of Chum Ruin Mine, 104.  
 Skulls, from Mapungubwe, 117.  
 Slaves, Abyssinian, 40.  
 Slaves, Greek, 30.  
 Soapstone beam, from Zimbabwe, 77.  
 Sofala, 19, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 44, 45, 51, 166, 168-169, 170, 172-174, 198, 205.  
 Sofala, Arab state of, 172, 198, 199.  
 Sofala Sheik or Sultan, 106.  
 Sokotra Island, 42.  
 Solar attributes of a deity of fertility, 139.  
 Solomon, King, 27, 28, 37, 51, 88, 91, 95, 109, 114, 119, 120, 194.  
 Somal coast of East Africa, 165.  
 Somalia, 15-16, 28, 136, 165, 166, 173.  
 Somaliland, 24, 51, 84, 89.  
 Somalis, 141, 167.  
 Son of the Supreme Lord, Waqlimi, 170.  
 Sopt, Egyptian god, 139.  
 Sorenane (Suleiman), 163.  
 Sotho, 170-171, 198, 203.  
 South-west Arabia, 51, 93, 94, 95, 126, 170, 194.  
 Southern Arabia, 91, 93, 95, 109, 122, 125, 139, 142, 149, 170.  
 Sovereign Master (Makandjalou), 170.  
 Square-rigged vessels, 17-19, 21.  
 Spiral motif, 156.  
 St. Helena Bay, 38.  
 "Stamp ware" found at Zimbabwe, 103.  
 Standing stones of the megalithic cultures, 149.  
 Steadman, Andrew, 218.  
 Stonehenge, 71.  
 Strabo, the early geographer, 27.  
 Straits of Madagascar, 59.  
 Structures, Arabic, 79.  
 Sudan, 15, 55, 98, 99, 168.  
 Suez, 71.  
 Sufalah (Sofala), 35.  
 Suhara (Goa), 27, 30.  
 Suleiman, 114, 162, 163.  
 Sultan or Sheik of Mombasa, 173.  
 Sultans of Persia, Ottoman, 185.  
 Sumatra, 44.  
 Sumerian buildings, 77.  
 Sumerians, 140, 144.  
 Summers, Roger, 51, 115-116, 126-127, 189-190, 212-215.  
 Sung Dynasty, 185.  
 Sun-god, concept of in Central Africa, 84.  
 Sun-symbol, of Sabaeen origin, 194.  
 Supreme God, 162, 173, 207.  
 Swahili, 36, 40, 169.  
 Swahili Moslems, 36, 91, 122, 128, 132, 134-135, 162, 164, 166-170.  
 Symbols on temples in Egypt, Iran and Syria, 156.  
 Symbols on temples in Malta, 77.  
 Symbols on temples in prehistoric Mesopotamia, 156.  
 Syrian Seas, 20.  
 Syria, 140.  
 Systems, wind, 18, 20.  
 Talmud, 95.  
 Tambotie wood, Zimbabwe, 110.  
 Tanga, Arab colony, 59.  
 Tanganyika, 55, 57, 110, 198.  
 Tanganyikan coasts, 32, 51.  
 Tanganyika, Lake, 198.  
 Tarma, city on a lake, East Africa, 136.  
 Tarxien temples, Malta, 77, 139.  
 Tau Ka Elohim (Lion of the Great God) in seSotho, 173.  
 Temple of Awwam, 84.  
 Temple of Bilqis (Hahram Bilqis), 84.  
 Temple of Ilumquh, 84.  
 Temple of Marib, 84.  
 Temple at Zimbabwe, 115-117, 138.  
 Temples, Sabaeen, 89.  
 Terraced agriculture of the Sabaeans, 159.  
 Thames River, 60.  
 Theal, G. M., 103.  
 Thebes, Greece, 60.  
 Theophilus, Indian, 89.  
 Thomas, Bertram, 141.  
 Thompson, Gertrude Caton, (See: Caton Thompson, Gertrude).  
 Thoth, the Egyptian moon god, 159.  
 Three Cranes, worshipped at Mecca, 159.  
 Tiglath Pileser II of Assyria, 88.  
 Tonga people, 198.  
 Torwa, country of, 209.  
 Touklm, Zenj king's name, 173.  
 Traprain Law, 98.  
 "Tree of Knowledge", Genesis, 144.  
 Trojan scyphus pot, 60.  
 Truro Museum, ingot of tin in, 193.  
 Tsi-nan-chu, residence of Archbishop in China, 60.  
 Tyre, Hiram King of, 27, 28, 51, 91, 95, 109, 119.  
 Uganda, 55, 56, 121.  
 Ullendorff, Edward, 94.  
 Uma, or Sakti, wife of Siva, 149.  
 Umma Zaidiyya (the Emozoids), 114.  
 Um Nombata, Regent of the Matabele, 50.  
 Untali figurine, 191.  
 Valley, Mazoe, 52.  
 Valley, Rift, 17.  
 Van Warmelo, N. J., 199.  
 Vasin Gishu Plateau, 42.  
 Veclanga (a corruption of Karanga), 206.  
 Venda (BaVenda), 132, 134, 157, 198, 202-204, 207.  
 Vendaland (Northern Transvaal), 132, 200, 202.  
 Venice, 214.  
 Venus (Ialmaqah), 84.  
 Venus (Ishtar), 89, 141.  
 Vespasian Roman Emperor, first century A.D., 30.  
 Victoria, Lake, 42, 43, 136.  
 Virampatnam-Arikamodu, near Pondicherry, 30.  
 Vitry, Cardinal Jacques de, 20.  
 Wadi Hadhramaut, 84.  
 Wadi Magharah, 139.  
 Wadi Sher, 91.  
 Wagner, Percy A., 50.  
 Wak Wak people, 35, 38.  
 Wangemann, Dr., 135.  
 Waqlima, 174.  
 Waqlimi (name from seSotho, Morwa wa ka Limi), 170.  
 Wattle and daub (pole and dagga), 211.  
 Wa-wa, word used in Manicaland for beer, 69.  
 Welsh Britons, 173.  
 West Africa, 65, 82, 140.  
 White Nile, 17.  
 Wind systems, 17-18, 20.  
 White Libyans, Hamitic, 150.  
 X-Group civilisation of Nubia, 98-100.  
 Xerxes, 27.  
 Yambo, port in the Yemen, 31.  
 Yemen, 37, 109, 134, 138, 162, 164.  
 Yemeni Arabs, 162, 170.  
 Yemenis (Sabaeans), 162.  
 Yoni of Uma or Sakti, wife of the god Siva, 149.  
 Yoruba in Nigeria, 146.  
 Yufi, place or town of, 174, 198.  
 Zaid (of the Emozoids), 114, 162, 163.  
 Zaidites, 162.  
 Zabag, Isles of, 172.  
 Zaborowski-Moindron, 145.  
 Zafar, (Saphor), a city, 125.  
 Zambia, 183.  
 Zambezi River, 35, 37, 40, 55, 59, 110, 113, 119, 166, 172-173, 175, 194, 207.  
 Zambezi Valley, scattered Negroid settlements in, 113.  
 Zang, 33, 35, 36, 38, 41, 45, 165.  
 Zanguebar (Zanzibar), 165.  
 Zanj, 163.  
 Zanzibar, 20, 32, 33, 35, 51.  
 Zeng, 45.  
 Zeng coast, 51.  
 Zenj, 33, 35, 36, 38, 41, 163-175, 194, 198, 200-202.  
 Zenj, Land of the, 165.  
 Zeus, legend in Portuguese Africa, 155.  
 Zhand (Zinj), ruler of, 41.  
 "Zimbabwe" bird, 65, 99, 139, 140.  
 Zimbabwe, Temples at, 138.  
 Zindj, 42, 45.  
 Zing, 33, 35, 41, 57, 165.  
 Zingion Ocean, 41.  
 Zinj, 41, 45, 165.  
 Zu, Mesopotamian storm-god, 139.  
 Zulu word for God, Mkulunkulu, 170.  
 Zumubany (place of Monomotapa's residence), 206.